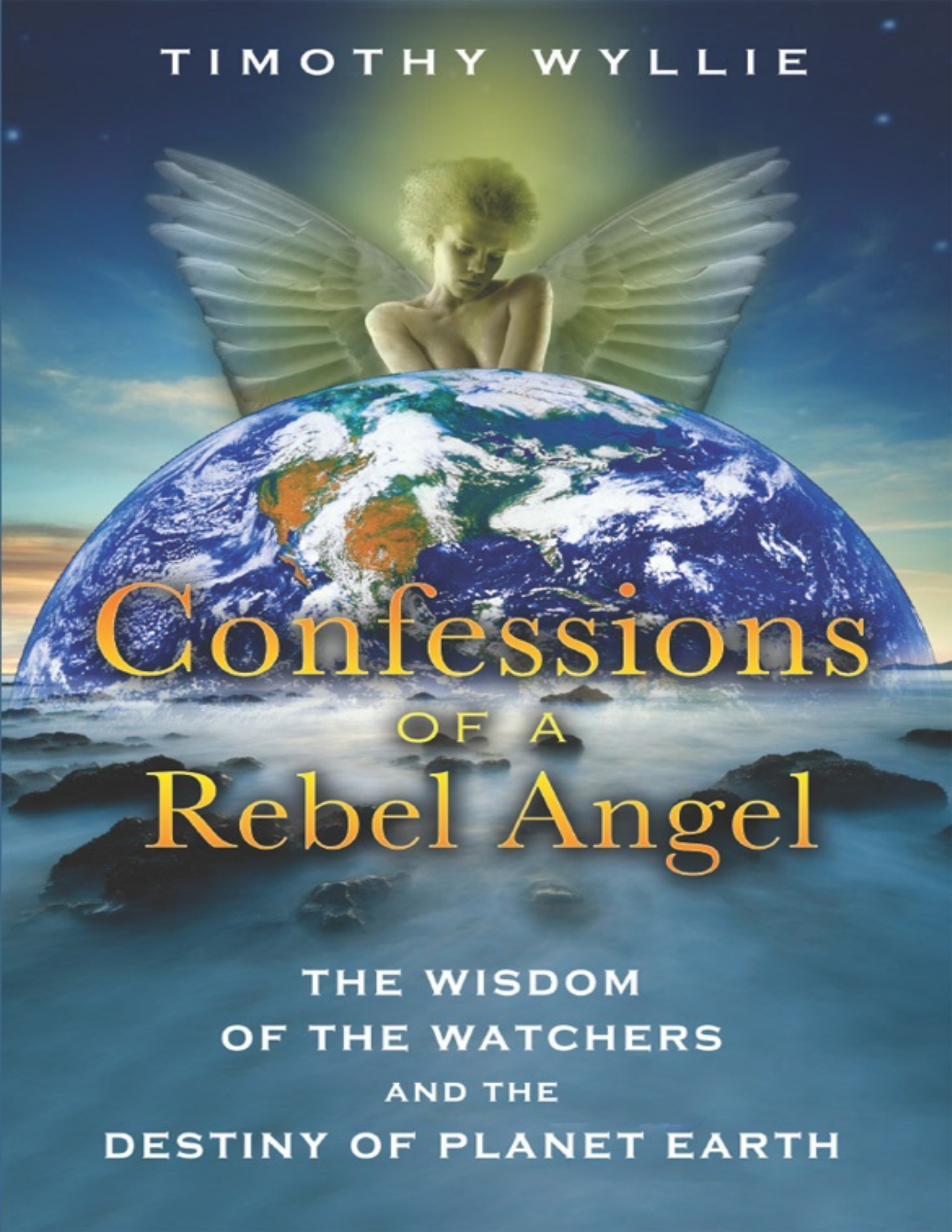
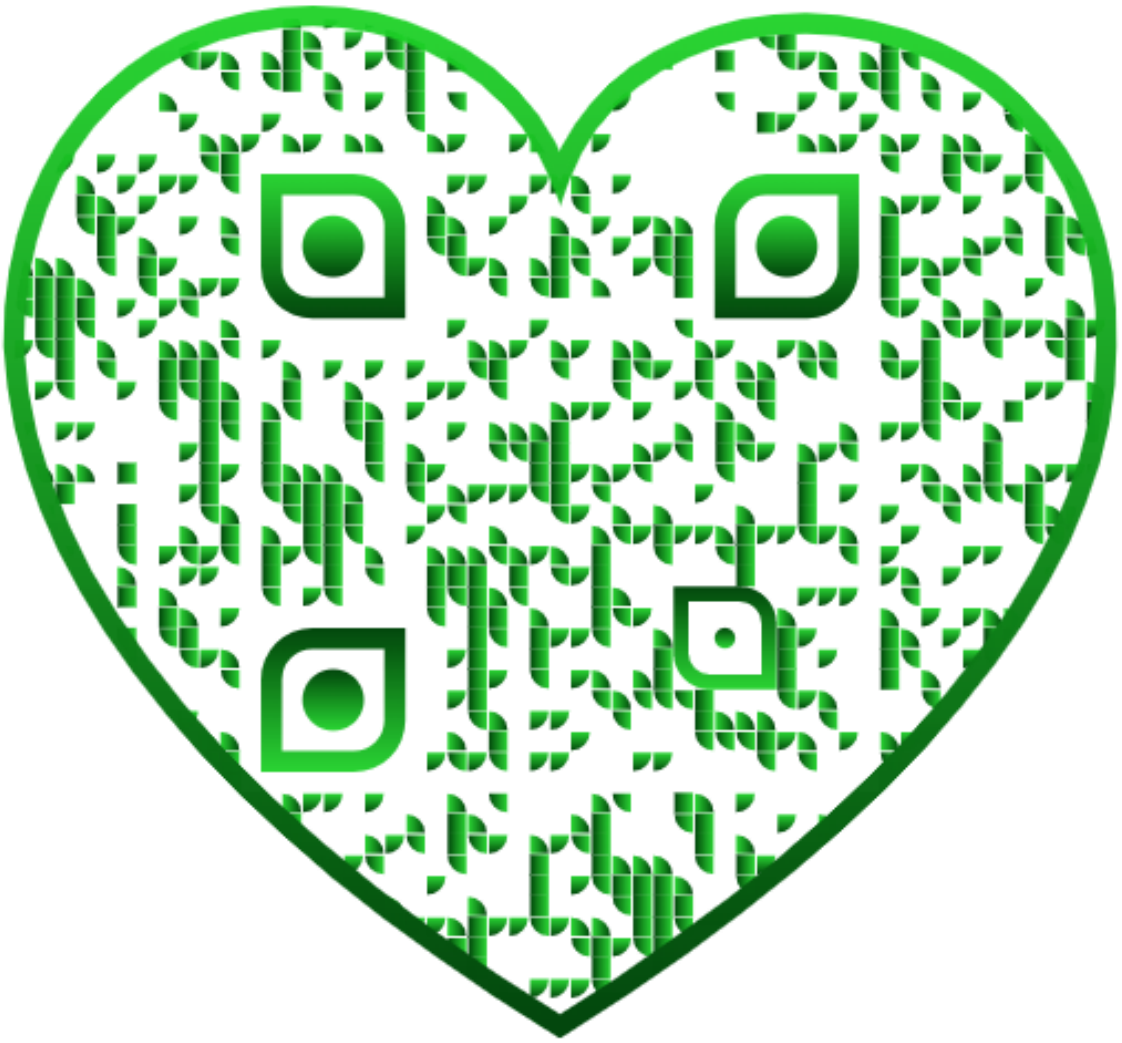
TIMOTHY WYLLIE



Confessions OF A Rebel Angel

THE WISDOM OF THE WATCHERS AND THE DESTINY OF PLANET EARTH



Confessions OF A Rebel Angel

THE WISDOM OF THE WATCHERS AND THE DESTINY OF PLANET EARTH

TIMOTHY WYLLIE

Bear & Company
Rochester, Vermont • Toronto, Canada

Confessions
OF A
Rebel Angel

"*Confessions of a Rebel Angel* is Timothy Wyllie's magnum opus. This saga is brilliant, arresting, and fulfilling; a true story of the esoteric secrets that fester in the human heart that are now awakening the human spirit. Georgia, a juicy and witty rebel angel, comes to us through Wyllie's engrossing and engaging prose—a totally balanced story of humankind's evolution and struggles with the forces of the dark and the light. If you want the real truth about the fallen angels, read this book!"

BARBARA HAND CLOW, AUTHOR OF
AWAKENING THE PLANETARY MIND

"Timothy Wyllie's books have come to be recognized as the foremost spiritual autobiographies of the age. In this latest installment Timothy steps aside to allow a companion angel to rejig the narrative from her point of view. Fulfilling Geoffrey Hodson's century-old prediction of *The Brotherhood of Angels and Men*, this book unveils the portal through which that brotherhood can emerge, and does so with style, humor, and grace."

GORDON PHINN, AUTHOR OF *AN AMERICAN IN HEAVEN*
AND *ETERNAL LIFE AND HOW TO ENJOY IT*

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INTRODUCTION

Getting to Know Georgia

A Near-Death Experience, the Intuition Muscle, the Lucifer Rebellion, and Writing Collaboratively with Angels

Over the many years of following an elusive trail of nonhuman intelligences, I've come to think of myself as an explorer of consciousness; I use my own mind as an experiential workbench. I have found that the extent to which I can feel and perceive, and sometimes understand, other intelligent life-forms in the universe almost entirely depends on my own state of consciousness.

Following an eye-opening, near-death experience (NDE) in 1973, I finally became fully aware that other levels of reality interpenetrate ours. The power of the NDE left me reeling and yet ultimately convinced me that my life's path involves exploring these other regions and domains of beingness, some of which can be classified as "angels."

I first encountered angels in the course of my NDE. Seven years later, after they appeared speaking through a light-trance medium in Toronto, I decided to take them seriously enough to spend the next two years learning how to make a reliable connection with my own companion (guardian) angels. This then led to fulfilling their wishes to help more people become aware of their presence by holding workshops with my partner, Alma Daniel, and teaching the participants how to make contact with the higher realms. In 1992, Alma and I, together with Andrew Ramer, wrote *Ask Your Angels.* Having been translated into eight languages, it has become a very successful manual for contacting one's companion angels.

After I had learned to work with angels, I wrote my next two books —*Adventures Among Spiritual Intelligences* and the more recent *Return of the Rebel Angels*—in conscious collaboration with two of them, Zophiel and Zadkiel, who were assigned to work with me.

Yet, throughout this gradual process of opening to subtle inner voices, of

learning to test and discern one from another, I became aware of *another* presence, one that, although more reticent at first than the others, has, over the years, continued to make herself felt. Georgia is an angel, certainly, or a Watcher, as she prefers to be called; however, she is quite unlike any angel I've ever encountered.

I now believe that her initial, apparent shyness was more a question of timing as well as my need for more confirmation and confidence, because it later became evident that she wanted to write a book with me. This was to be different from my previous books in that Georgia hoped to tell her own story through me, while at the same time weave into it what she had observed of *my* life, but from her own, often idiosyncratic, point of view.

Although I had first encountered Georgia in the late 1980s, apparently she had tried to make contact with me far earlier in my life. When she first appeared, I was scared stiff; my old wartime fear circuits started erupting all over again, and I had a real problem figuring out what was happening to me. I thought I might have been going a little crazy back there for a year or two. Yet I was happy and well adjusted: I was paying my bills, writing my books, drawing my graphics, and generally taking care of business.

I was initially cautious about allowing Georgia into my consciousness and into my life, thinking she might merely be some projection of my own desires and wishes. Later I came to believe that she might be my anima—my female aspect—because there were times that she would test my commitment to her by requiring me to wear women's clothes. As you might imagine, I was hardly enthusiastic about doing this. I'm not gay, or particularly effeminate by nature, and had no desire to appear any more foolish than I normally do, until Georgia explained that cross-dressing served our mutual purposes. She intended to create a kinetic feedback system whereby the sensation of women's clothes on the surface of my skin would remind both of us that she was "overlighting" me. And, because following my inner promptings is what allowed me to communicate with angels in the first place, I faced my fears and plunged in—even if I did make a pretty terrifying-looking creature in five-inch heels!

I emphasize this, because part of the bargain I worked out with Georgia was that she could occupy my body and write her book using my brain and hands, with the proviso that I was to remain present as an observer

throughout. Unlike a full-trance medium—who leaves her body while another entity possesses it and speaks through it—I chose the more challenging option of sharing my body for the purposes of this work and what Georgia feels is necessary to express.

Over the years of writing this book, our arrangement has gone through a number of changes. While the first part of the book was written longhand entirely by Georgia, with me merely doing a light edit when typing it up, we later managed to work in such a way that both of us could actually write it simultaneously. It's a curious process to describe, and I'm not even sure myself how it works. While I received Georgia's earlier material as a fluid flow of automatic writing, she now requires me to sit at the keyboard and listen to the BBC radio over earphones (to distract my monkey mind, she tells me) and wait for her words to filter up into my conscious attention. At that point it becomes more of a conscious collaboration as we work together to frame whatever it is we have to say in the most lucid way possible.

Gradually, over time, she has shown herself to be an independent being, with her kindness and ever-present consideration for just how much weirdness I can handle. Because this is a collaboration, and not simply a case of her taking over my body, Georgia never pressures me in any way. You can tell from her voice that she is strong and remarkably savvy in many areas of human endeavor, but she has always been most solicitous in her approaches to me. I work on the assumption that our contact is genuine and real and that it is sanctioned by the God I hold true in my heart and whom both Georgia and I revere and continue to serve.

I agree with Dr. John C. Lilly's insight in his seminal book, *Simulations of God*, that belief systems are rungs on the ladder of self-knowledge. With that observation firmly in mind, I have chosen to adopt the belief that Georgia is who she says she is—an angel who has become a Watcher by falling into the denser frequencies of life in this world and who has chosen to work with me and others for her own redemption and for the transformation of our planet.

I found it personally interesting to see how Georgia's attitudes and opinions have gradually changed over the course of this work. There were times when I disagreed with her or felt she was being overly conspiratorial, but I've chosen to give her free rein to tell her story as she wishes—blemishes and all. Some of her more acerbic observations about Multiverse

personnel she has encountered fall under this category and are hers alone.

She clearly feels justified in speaking so plainly. Since aligning herself with Lucifer's rebellion almost a quarter of a million years ago, she has been watching all her dreams and aspirations turn to dust as this planet has fallen further and further into chaos and ruin. Her story is one of gradually coming to terms with the consequences of her decision to follow Lucifer, her loss of faith, and then her equally gradual realization that all things in the Multiverse ultimately work out for the best.

For myself, having another voice narrating my story from a more knowing point of view has been nothing short of revelatory. Although I didn't become fully aware of Georgia's presence until I was in my forties, she tells me that she's been observing me for a number of lifetimes. This, in itself, was an eye-opener. Then I discovered that deeper threads run through life and are unrealized at the time, yet, when they're understood in retrospect, they take on a renewed level of importance. This has reassured me that we are all citizens of the Multiverse, whether or not we know it, and that each one of us is loved and cared for on our spiritual journey in ways we can scarcely imagine.

In starting to work with Georgia, I soon realized—as have most of us who've chosen to venture behind the scrim of everyday reality—that the Multiverse is complex and populated by a wide variety of life-forms, some of whom have a great interest in life in this world. I use the word *Multiverse* on Georgia's recommendation, specifically to include the many layers—both inner and outer—of what is conventionally referred to as the universe. She assures me that life exists as abundantly on all the many levels of the Multiverse, every bit as copiously as life shows up in all available niches in our biosphere.

One great group of these entities hails from the inner worlds of the hierarchies of angels and archangels, and others share the same broad range of vibrational frequencies that we humans do. This latter group, these "others," manifest to us—when we can perceive them—as extraterrestrials in what Georgia calls the "outer worlds."

This cleared up a problem for me that has so confused those interested in extraterrestrial phenomena. It is not a question of whether visitors to our planet Earth are ETs or angels. Both of these great lines of sentience are

reaching through to us—from the outer, material worlds of the extraterrestrials and from the inner worlds of the celestials—at this key point in human evolution.

Thanks to *The Urantia Book,* the most reliable compendium of celestial information I have yet come across, we now know that the Multiverse is a vast and well-organized business. Those of us who are prepared to extend our fields of consciousness sufficiently are able to participate in its affairs. We can each do this to the extent that we are able to open our hearts and minds to the unseen depths of life, and, most of all, by learning to trust our intuitions. With the contemporary emphasis on evidentiary thinking, that for which no repeatable evidence exists is either pushed to the sidelines of science and academia, or it's dismissed out of hand as irrational or impossible. While objective, fact-based, scientific belief systems have shrugged off many of the inherited burdens of superstition, an overemphasis on rationality has also led to a dangerous atrophying of our inner knowing.

In my experience, intuition can best be thought of as a muscle: if it is not used, it grows weak and becomes unreliable. Most of us educated in the Western world are taught from an early age to place our trust in external sources of knowledge. We are led to believe that following our intuition and doing what we deeply want to do will result in total self-indulgence and, ultimately, anarchy and social chaos.

We are not generally encouraged to understand that there are issues to which it is correct to apply intuition and others to which rational, logical thought is better suited. Thus, we have respected scientists rejecting, for example, the existence of angels or God or extraterrestrials because there is no rational evidence for them. Yet this is simply applying an incorrect system of analysis to matters that surrender their truths in a far more subtle way.

Developing an effective intuition, an inner voice that can be trusted, is not an overnight affair. It can take us into unknown territory and will often have its own reasons for doing so. Having said this, it is well worth noting that there have been a few times over the years when my intuition has proved inaccurate, or even downright wrong, but the mistakes I made as a consequence were mine to learn from and not the errors of others in whom I might have mistakenly placed my trust. I have also gone counter to my intuition from time to time and had to learn the unfortunate consequences of

doing that.

Yet the greatest danger of a dormant intuition may be in missing what is truly happening on this planet at this very special point in the evolution of intelligent life. Listening with the wisdom of the heart will reveal a different picture from what we are likely to get on the nightly news. This is not to say that terrible crimes and injustice don't continue but that there are deeper meanings and patterns in the ways of humanity, ones that become discernible through intuitive means. While rational belief might hold that the pending global situation is unavoidably disastrous, a trusted intuition will reveal a world that is in the process of massive spiritual transformation.

Georgia has taught me all this—and more—although, in the long run, she may turn out to be someone or something else entirely. One psychologist might consider Georgia a repressed aspect of myself; another might view her as a subpersonality of mine and diagnose me as suffering from multiple personality disorder. A Buddhist might wonder if Georgia is a tulpa, an entity I created by my focused intention; while a skeptic is guaranteed to dismiss her as a delusion and me as crazy. That's just fine with me. For now I am accepting Georgia at face value, as I know the true worth of her story lies in the integrity and coherence of the knowledge and information she passes on to us.

She hasn't yet told me why she insists on calling me Mein Host, and I wonder if she ever will. Whenever I've asked her I get the sense of a sly grin and a feeling that I'll know in good time. It seems she thinks of it as a private running joke that she includes to keep me curious. I have gone along with this, because it serves my purpose in maintaining some objectivity when she writes about me. However, it is the content of her work, and not what she chooses to call me, that is important. If, by allowing her to tell her story through me, she is able to activate others of her kind, then this work, so many years (and incarnations) in the making, will have been most worthwhile.

I would like to believe that Georgia's tale will be among the first of a new literary genre in which our celestial friends will feel free to share their adventures through the almost infinite corridors of time and space. As Georgia says: "I will always tell you the truth as I understand it. It's not perhaps the Truth, but at least it is *a* truth, and one that might help in filling in

the great patchwork quilt of Divinity that is the Supreme Being, the Holographic Matrix, the Rainbow Serpent of the Australian Aboriginals, or the Great Goddess of Western Mysticism."

Whatever name you choose to use, She is the One in whom we all find our ground of being—angels, extraterrestrials, humans, and cetaceans alike.

TIMOTHY WYLLIE

And when Thomas came back to his companions,
they asked him: “What did Jesus say to you?”
Thomas said to them:
“If I tell you one of the sayings He said to me
you will pick up stones and throw them at me,
and fire will come out of the stones and burn you up.”

JAMES M. ROBINSON,
SECRETS OF JESUS

I can only hope that by twenty-five
you will be old enough to understand the care
you must take, the responsibility of knowing
the truth of your heritage and destiny,
which, in our family,
are two branches of a single tree.

DANIELLE TRUSSONI,
ANGELOLOGY

1

Reverberations of Violence

Georgia on War, Angelic Arrivals, Early Out-of-Body Travels, and Violent Imprints and Survivor Guilt

Don’t expect me to put this narrative in any sort of chronological order, because angels don’t think like that. Well, we try to! We have to make a real effort to have any idea of what human beings are themselves thinking. You see that we can’t actually get into their minds; that is, unless they request it.

I guess I should at least try to start at the beginning—of Mein Host’s life anyway—which is all part of our bargain. My life we’ll come to as we are going along. Mein Host, the amiable consciousness who is allowing me to write these words through his body, is an old friend by now, although I have only really come to know him well through the course of this one incarnation.

He breaks in again to ask me why I choose to address him as *Mein Host*, with its Germanic overtones. It’s my humor, I tell him, and it is more at my expense than his. If he is patient with me and continues this narrative, in time he will discover why he is Mein Host to me. To continue my story: Mein Host was born just outside London in the midsummer of 1940, on a small island at the height of its lonely battle against the Nazi hordes. The Nazis attacking the island of his birth were co-opted by methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin, and a dictator sufficiently demonized by both a traumatized consciousness and ancient occult forces to attempt to dominate the world.

Why Mein Host chose—for he did choose that, I can tell you—to be born into such a war six weeks premature is curious to me—almost as if he were anxious to get here. The ways of mortals continue to puzzle me. Yet, given his prior incarnation, I suppose it was scarcely surprising, but my ward wasn’t to find that out until much later in his life.

His parents were already starting to have their difficulties. George, his father, was a bright and ambitious young architect in 1930s England before

the war. He and his architectural partner, another George, were already showing their promise by coming second only to Erich Mendelsohn and Serge Chermayeff—both world-class architects and refugees from the Bauhaus—in a prominent prewar English architectural competition.

However, the war was to change all that. George, ever the dreamer, volunteered for the Royal Air Force early in the war, only to be told that his eyesight was inadequate for the fighter-pilot fantasy he'd always harbored. Besides, he was much more essential as an architect for all the war-related factories that had to be hurriedly built. George's frustration at seeing his mates lofted into the air—even though they were soon to return to Earth in a rather less graceful way—wore down his spirit. The long hours of graphic drudgery, drawing interminable blueprints for arms factories, quickly destroyed his architectural ambitions as the years passed and the war continued unabated.

George always possessed a materialistic, show-off side to his personality—he kept two Rolls-Bentley saloon cars at his prime—and that aspect soon started running rampant. Although George was as kind as he was able to be to his squalling little brat, Mein Host was cramping his style. One of the few remaining photographs of George shows him tipping his glass of beer so the infant can take a drink. Yet there is kindness, and love of a sort, in this gesture, of which my ward has to remind himself lest he becomes too hard on the father he really never knew.

During a war the men who are left behind have a far wider selection of women available to them. One thing led to another, as these matters will, and soon George was having a variety of affairs, evidence of which Diana, his wife, eventually discovered. Showing a remarkable strength of purpose she took the child, now age two, and left London to join her sister Joyce, Joyce's husband Norman, and her small family in the village of Cranbrook, in Kent, and filed for divorce

George went downhill from then on, ultimately joining the army as a private—a humbling prospect for a proud man—then going AWOL and ending up in an army prison. Having a sensitive nature—his pub friends before the war gave him the effeminate nickname "Curly"—prison life was a singularly rude awakening for poor George in more ways than the obvious. Although I never checked him out until years after his death, when I was

required to coordinate a spiritual meeting between him and Mein Host, by then a man in his late thirties, George clearly left the brig a changed man.

Nevertheless, one of his affairs stuck, and he ended up marrying the bartending wife of a publican in the north of England, where he'd originally grown up. After the war George and his new wife emigrated to Australia to start another life and a family. From here on, George moves to the sidelines of the family history, never again to meet my ward in the flesh.

If you wonder why, in a volume of confessions purporting to be that of an angel, I would choose to focus also on the life of a mortal, then be aware of just how fascinated we angels are with the lives of human beings. It has always been so. There are numerous angels assigned to this planet, most of whom are not those who chose to follow Lucifer. In order to clarify this point over the course of this narrative, I refer to the rebel angels specifically as Watchers, because our destiny is proving to be different from that of the angels who remained loyal to the Multiverse Administration (MA). And to further clarify, I use the term *Watcher* to describe discarnate rebel angels, who are of a quite different order from those described in *The Book of Enoch,* which are embodied.

Allow me to digress for a moment to fill you in on the basic facts of this pivotal angelic rebellion that occurred about 203,000 years ago among the angelic administration of our Local System of 1,000 inhabitable planets. Lucifer was known at that time as System Sovereign and held administrative control over the approximately 620 planets that were then supporting intelligent mortal life in this Local System.

Every System of planets has a System Sovereign, and each planet is overseen by a Planetary Prince. Thirty-seven of these Planetary Princes, including our own Caligastia, chose to align themselves with Lucifer in his call for rebellion against the Multiverse Administration's established ways of supervising the evolution of intelligent life. (Lucifer's reasons for doing this are examined in greater detail later in this narrative.) Because Earth was one of these thirty-seven planets, the impact of this rebellion and its many repercussions have been profound and can be held responsible for much of the fear, inequity, and belligerence encountered here today.

I, Georgia, am one of the many angels who chose to follow the rebels. My

primary motive for taking on this work is to understand for myself the consequences of the decision I made so long ago. I believe I can do this by tracing back over what I have observed since I've been here—a little over half a million years—to try to identify key points in human prehistory when planetary affairs took a turn for the worse, as well as reviewing the part played by angels and other off-world personnel. To do this I will need to explain how we angels differ from our human wards. Our angelic nature may well be very different from human nature, and yet there is a marvelous compatibility, and a fascinating challenge, too, that frankly isn't quite to the taste of many of my kind.

Keep in mind that not having the same degree of individuation as mortals, we are creatures of far greater choicelessness and largely lack the ability all humans have to make those surprising leaps of intuition and acts of will. But, more than anything, we Watchers enjoy observing individual human beings in their struggle to elevate themselves above their animal natures, to gain a keener grasp of higher spiritual realities. This is the mortal journey. And we, who are created to oversee and administer this process over the endless eons, form a curiously complex relationship with our charges, made only more so for a Watcher by the possibility of a mortal incarnation to come. There! That is the first time I've been able to articulate that thought. I am amazed. I trust I will continue to surprise myself.

Having said that, I will return to my story.

You'll recall my mention of Diana, Mein Host's mother. She was made of somewhat sterner stuff than her husband, George. She worked in MI6 for British Intelligence before the war, moving down to Bletchley with the deciphering of the Enigma machine and only leaving to give birth to her son. Although always modest about her accomplishments, she confided to her son —after the Official Secrets Act expired in the 1970s—about her trips into Germany counting troop buildups and tank movements, and having once to eat her written notes aboard a train on the way home.

I can see her as she was then, a shy but dark-haired beauty—half-hearing, half-imagining the heavy boots of the German railway police as they march closer to her compartment; watching her stuff the torn-up pieces of paper into her mouth, feeling vulnerable and absurd, her face red with embarrassment, mouth dry, eyes wide with fear, chomping wildly to destroy her indigestible

transgression of the rules of the Great Game.

Later in her life and in her cups, she was inclined to blame herself for not more fully understanding the stresses that poor George was under: his drinking and his infidelities. But she acknowledged that she'd made a bold and, for those times, a daring choice to divorce her husband before the situation got any worse.

Which, of course, it did.

Diana was not to see or hear from George again until he turned up on her doorstep in London some nine years later, wanting to see his son. She made the soul-searchingly difficult decision not to let him do this, justifying it later by saying—often just holding back tears—that she didn't want to upend her son's life by bringing an absent father into the picture.

By now an eleven-year-old boy, Mein Host had been showing a complete lack of curiosity in his father, a mental block that persisted well into his late thirties. I could see that Diana was holding him in one of those maternal hypnotic holds; she just shut down all paternal references. He simply never thought about his father and, a little later, during his adolescence, when most fatherless children start getting interested in who begat them, it was as if his father never existed.

How could she have done this? You might well ponder this question, but you'd need to know a little bit about Diana's family history to understand the English aptitude for emotional repression.

Diana was born the eldest of three sisters to parents equally devastated by the First World War as the little family would become by World War II. Diana's father had been severely shell-shocked and gassed in the trenches of France and returned from the war a nervous wreck of a man. Rare cheerful moods were almost immediately followed by long periods of the blackest of depressions. Diana's mother, hopelessly ill-equipped to deal with her husband's mental instability, used to send her eldest daughter—no doubt her husband's favorite—up to the darkness of his bedroom to somehow cajole her father into a better mood. You can only imagine what a fruitless task this was and what desperate scars of failure it would have left on a twelve-year-old girl.

When she was a mere thirteen and a half, with her two younger sisters

spaced out at two-year intervals and considered too young to understand, Diana was told that her father had ended his life with a pistol. She was away at a convent—a boarding school in the English tradition—when she was called into the Mother Superior's office and curtly informed that her father had shot himself. He was dead. Told to be brave when she cried, Diana, as the oldest of the three children, pushed down her grief and anger to support her emotionally distraught mother.

And here is the clue to the English personality of that era: Diana's father's suicide, or indeed his death at all, was never once mentioned as the remaining family gathered for their meals and went about their daily tasks. The place in the children's lives so recently filled by a father, albeit a hopelessly dejected and forlorn one, was simply never mentioned.

So, given that example of stiff-upper-lip stoicism, it isn't surprising that Diana was later able to successfully hide any reference to her erstwhile husband from her largely indifferent son. As to why the boy fell so willingly into this blindness, I can only say that there were a lot of other things on his young mind.

I attended Mein Host's birth early that warm June morning in 1940, albeit it in a quiet and nonparticipatory role. Other angels were more actively involved with the process, as they always are, soothing and running a gentle and supportive resonance through the hospital ward.

This process of human birth is especially intriguing to us angels, because we are not created in this way. I frankly can't recall when I was born. I seem to have lived forever. What I do know is that we are created by our Mother Spirit in great clans, often many tens of thousands of us are manifested simultaneously. And that is what it feels like: one moment we are not, and the next moment we are. Perhaps for you, it is akin to those first few seconds after you awaken from a deep sleep and you aren't quite sure where you are, or indeed, what you are.

* * *

Angels don't have a childhood in any human sense of the word. Certainly we gain degrees of understanding from experience, but, unlike mortals, we are created for our specific tasks and positions in the administration of the Multiverse. It is those roles that we are intended to fulfill faithfully until the

end of time. And that can be a very long time indeed! Many passages of our constellation around the galactic center and here we still are, stationary in time, stuck like ants in amber, while we watch these odd mortal creatures, so strangely similar to us and yet rising from the evolution of material beings on all the inhabited planets of the vast Multiverse. From monkeys, no less!

The higher celestials—the archangels responsible for the smooth running of the Multiverse—do not experience the tensions we angels of humbler stock encounter while we observe, often silently, as generations of mortal beings live and die. Humans generally awaken to their eternal life after the death of their bodies and to the exhilaration of their long climb up the ladder of progressive spiritual awakenings, until they become aware of who they truly are and what their real purpose is.

In the unlikely event that you, dear reader, are so profoundly disillusioned with the prospect of eternal life, I would like to reassure you that a choice is freely given when you are awakened from the dream of death as to whether or not you wish to proceed. Although it is sometimes hard to believe from within the mortal coil, the Multiverse is, in the end, exquisitely fair: choice is always fairly given.

There are those among us who teach that you mortal creatures, so recently arisen from the higher primates, are, unlike us, indwelt by the Divine Father of All, or at least by a fragment of Him. This might well seem strange, especially when you take a long, hard look at the state of the world and what terrible things human beings can do to one another.

Yet when I talk to Joy, one of the two companion (guardian) angels who accompany Mein Host, she assures me that she can sense this so-called Divine Spark, this Atman, burning inside the heart of her charge, even if I cannot. I can only take it on faith. Indeed, I have often wondered (and frankly, wondering is not my strong suit) whether it is just as likely that any sense of godhood my charge might feel from time to time—especially in those moments when he reaches the pinnacle of human consciousness—may equally well come from the Divinity inherent in the heart of matter, mater, or, literally, the body of the Holy Mother Spirit, the Matrix, the beloved Mother of all the angels in this Local Universe.

Over the course of this narrative I will try to convey an idea of the structure

and workings of the Multiverse as I understand it, and I'll be using some of what Mein Host has learned from his reading and experiences. I do this unapologetically, because I share the vocabulary and the conceptual understandings of my ward to frame my story.

So, for now, let me simply focus on what I referred to previously as a Local Universe, to give you a sense of scale. Local Universes—and there are 100,000 of them in each of the seven Superuniverses—are relatively autonomous social and political units of 10 million inhabited planets. It's the sum of these seven Superuniverses that I refer to as the Multiverse. The Multiverse itself is a finite structure, shaped, I'm told, like a multilayered torus that derives its fundamental energies from an even deeper Source, which I've learned is the Central Universe, although I have never been there. It's far too elevated for my kind. The Melchizedek teach that the great Multiverse Creators reside within the Central Universe. At each level of the Multiverse there are celestial beings who guide and minister to the material beings within their domains.

At the level of the Local Universe are two primary creator beings—a Creator Son and a Holy Mother Spirit (of whom more later), who, between them, organize and shape the energies pouring through from the Central Universe. These energies create all the life-forms inhabiting their Local Universe.

Each Local Universe is divided into a nested hierarchy of levels, the smallest of which is a local System of one thousand inhabited, or to be inhabited, worlds. Your System, for example, has about 620 planets that are currently populated with mortals very much like yourselves. As holds true for the Local Universe, there is a pair of beings who oversee all the angels and mortals within their local domain. The names given this pair in your System —Lucifer and Satan—will have a familiar and likely unfavorable resonance, but I would suggest forbearance because there is far more to their story than is generally known. Much of this I'll be addressing in the pages of this book.

In understanding more of the nature of these two beings, Descending Sons in general parlance (as opposed to Ascending Sons, which includes all mortals), their hold over this world and the thirty-six other worlds in this Local System can start to be released. Some of the most negative aspects of Lucifer and Satan's energies are deeply embedded in this planet's mental and

psychic circuitry, and these will need to be untangled.

One of the reasons I took on this writing project with Mein Host's kind indulgence was to work out for myself what went wrong in the overall plan. I was also driven by wanting to find out how the principal protagonists precipitated the situation so long ago that has resulted, if indirectly, in the chaos and fear you see in your world today.

I admit now (let's get it over with right off the bat) that we were all mistaken, although it has taken me some time to arrive at that conclusion. Not being able to perceive the Indwelling Spirit in our mortal charges, having to accept it on faith from superiors we were growing to distrust—all this and more rendered us insensitive to the true nature of our functions.

Perhaps it was this very blindness to the true nature of his mortal charges that led Lucifer, our System Sovereign, to revolt against the Multiverse Administration 203,000 years ago. I know this will sound improbably long ago—the most ancient of ancient history to many of you reading this—but, as I said, angels have a more fluid sense of the passage of time. For us the revolution often seems like yesterday.

Let me add here that I use "revolution" and "rebellion" interchangeably, as both words tell of the same event, and yet there is a subtle but important semantic difference for the protagonists. An administration will call an uprising a rebellion and claim their opposition are rebelling against their authority, whereas those inciting an uprising will call themselves revolutionaries and their uprising a revolution. If I do favor one term over the other it's generally pertinent to the point of view from which I'm describing the event.

Thus, here I choose to use the term *rebellion,* because it was one of the most devastating events to have occurred within the angelic realm in recent times, and it will turn up again and again as this story proceeds. The rebellion profoundly unhinged life on this planet and the other thirty-six worlds that fell under its influence. Not only did humans, on the whole, become progressively more estranged from their angelic counselors and guides, but a deep suspicion of all matters celestial was created in the world mind of each of the dissenting planets.

Although these thirty-seven worlds were scarcely a handful of the more than six hundred inhabited planets within the System Sovereign's influence at

that time, that was no mitigation of the increasingly chaotic quality of life in these dissenting worlds. To make the situation even more difficult, as a consequence of the rebellion those planets (Earth obviously included) were cut off and isolated from the general Multiverse reality and the local star routes.

On the positive side of this conflict, it is striking to see how millennia of planetary isolation have bred an extraordinarily hardy bunch of human beings capable at best of "believing without seeing" and of being able to develop the sufficient inner strength to receive revelations from higher orders of universal intelligence.

On the other side of the issue, as if to defy all need for Divinity in life, humans have also found it possible to deny the obvious and ever-present evidence of a high intelligence inherent in Creation. Angels find it a source of endless amazement that some humans can dismiss this marvelous act of creation as a chance concatenation of random molecules without ever grappling with how this whole elaborate dance of life came to be in the first place. If you were to give the matter any thought, it would quickly become obvious that there simply hasn't been enough time since the Local Universe was created for all these random events to have been worked through—certainly not enough to have produced such an astonishingly orderly distribution of galaxies, constellations, and ultimately the planets themselves, with all their myriad differing life-forms. Even logic requires some form of intelligent hand behind it all. Your Charles Darwin's theory of evolution through natural selection tells only a small part of the story but doesn't begin to address the true origins of life in this world.

However, this is no time for me to be rattling on about the Multiverse and all its teeming inhabitants, which will all become clearer to you when you die and awaken to your own new life. You see, there is a tradition, now lost in your world—along with the great store of wisdom that would have been your birthright on a more normal planet—that would have informed you of the wealth of intelligent life that surrounds you. You would be aware of the angelic realms, of the ever-present nature spirits, and of the enormous, populated Multiverse.

But this world of yours could never be called normal. For reasons beyond my current understanding (I always wish to be completely honest about my

limitations with you, dear reader), this is soon to become the most significant planet—politically, that is—on your level of density in this whole Local Universe of ten million inhabited planets. This planetary elevation remains a mystery, and it's my great hope that it will occur while I am writing this narrative.

Now if it comes as a surprise that we have politics in the celestial realms, merely consider that when bureaucrats of any stripe attempt to organize a large territory—be they angels or mortals—sooner or later a bureaucracy takes over. At that point the organization is run more for the benefit of the governing bodies and their interests. It had taken Lucifer and his revolutionary ideas to bring matters to a head in his Local System by calling into question the whole operation being designed to serve the spiritual growth and ascension of mortal beings. There was far more to Lucifer's dissenting views than that, but it was this cavalier attitude to the mortals in his charge, cloaked by his demand for greater freedom for all beings, that most disturbed MA.

If there is truth to the notion that an aspect of the Creator God abides in the hearts of these strange, squiggly, alarmingly aggressive beings who call themselves human, then this would suggest a certain equilibrium in the balance of intelligent life in the Multiverse. That the Creator would place a fragment of Himself into these creatures who are so low in the great chain of intelligent life in the Multiverse, and yet appear to have the choice to be raised to the very pinnacle of divine consciousness, remains one of those imponderable mysteries to all angels.

Yet there must be good reason for it. There are some who even say that ascendant mortals are to become the creator beings of new worlds, out beyond the limits of the seven vast Superuniverses. Yet none of us know this for certain.

Let me say at this point that I have been present in this world for almost as long as humans have been regarded as sentient. I have also been fortunate to make a few infrequent transports to Zandana, a nearby planet also aligned with the Lucifer Rebellion, but one that escaped the worst ravages of planetary chaos.

I was present, although I was seldom permitted to play an active role, in

the great civilizations of Lemuria and Atlantis and their Egyptian and South American outposts. However, those of our kind progressively lost any influence over both cultures when each, for different reasons, collapsed and their surviving populations dispersed around the world to form the unacknowledged antecedents of all subsequent civilizations.

I was originally awarded a post in this world, then thought to be undistinguished, in the time before the revolution brought the first light of the Supreme to those of us capable of recognizing our System Sovereign's guidance. I was among those able to listen deeply within ourselves to new levels of understanding.

We'd heard talk of the conflict that was raging among the highest sons of our Local System. Some were even saying that secession was being considered; others were asserting that Lucifer, his colleague Satan, and their cohorts were defectors and were succumbing to resentment and vainglory. The trouble is that we angels aren't really equipped emotionally to deal with the defection of our superiors. Impossible doubts filled our minds as we struggled to make peace with all the new choices we were facing.

Multiverse history was little help to us, because the couple of earlier rebellions that had occurred in this Local Universe were barely talked about, let alone widely taught in the Melchizedek universities. The ruling bureaucracy had every reason to move on from all that trouble in such a distant past.

What the Multiverse Administration didn't realize at the time, although it's so much clearer now, is that there had to be some sort of complicity on the highest levels, far above Lucifer and Satan's heads, for a revolution to have occurred at all.

The subsequent explanations by agents of MA concerning the eventual defection of so many Planetary Princes and System Sovereigns generally speak of their pride and envy and reject their calls for greater freedoms as irresponsible hedonism. MA also teaches about the risks involved at this late stage of Multiverse density, when the high beings who get posted to these far-flung star systems have to be created in such a way that they have a deep level of empathy and understanding for their mortal wards. The density of matter is mirrored by the density of the emotional bodies needed to cope with the often extremely polarized levels of emotion on these planets. This can be

a dangerous level of empathy, which can easily slip into sympathy, or so MA will tell you, but deemed necessary if the angels are to have any real feeling for how life is lived in the third-density planets they administer.

This isn't the moment to go into a detailed deconstruction of the event that was to so thoroughly influence mortal life on the thirty-seven planets affected by Lucifer's revolution, but you'll probably be able to detect where my feelings reside. Mind you, this is no apologia for Lucifer or Satan or any of us dissenters. We made our choices, and we've had to live with them. Besides, we haven't yet seen the full flowering of the revolution. Of course the initial phases might have been handled in a less troublesome way. But, then again, could they have?

There is a strange inevitability to major Multiverse upheavals. They have their own rhythms and reasons that are beyond the understanding of many of even the highest angels. I've come to my own opinion, which I shall examine over the course of this narrative. It's a radical concept, and I want to see if it is borne out over the course of my exploration. Could it really have been that the revolution was allowed to occur, or was even sanctioned, by levels far beyond the reach of lowly Watchers like myself? Whether or not this turns out to be more substantial than one Watcher's opinion, the thought itself has brought me a modicum of comfort.

There are other compensations, too, which will become more obvious as my story unfolds.

* * *

Back now to my ward and the young family. Diana and her by-now two-year-old son, Mein Host, had rented a house near her younger sister Joyce, her husband Norman, and her soon-to-be brood of four children, Mein Host's cousins. Uncle Norman, a civil engineer, was in charge of maintaining the English South Coast's seawall. He came and went with the varying conditions of the wall and the accuracy of German bombers. The two houses were in Cranbrook, a small village in Kent, in the southeast corner of England, and must have seemed to promise safe refuge from the bombs raining down on London during the Blitz and later throughout the war.

This was not quite what happened, though. It started with the German bombers who had to turn back before reaching London and dropped their

bombs on Kentish villages before limping back across the English Channel. The stresses the villagers experienced rapidly intensified as the war progressed and the ever-inventive Nazi engineers developed the V1 ramjet flying bomb. The village of Cranbrook, as the families were soon to discover, lay precisely under the route these doodlebugs took on the way from their launchpads in Nazi Europe to hit London. And, unfortunately for the residents of the village, one way the ramjets' trajectories could be controlled was through the amount of fuel they burned. This was a matter of trial and error that led to predictable results as the German engineers fiddled with the calibrations to get the range correct.

So my young ward's earliest memories are of being bundled beneath the stairs, or under a special table surrounded by a wire cage to keep out the shrapnel, in what was thought to be the safest place in the house. This shelter was not much good, though, if the building were to collapse, but the very least a loving parent could hope to do for the children.

And it was meant to be all about the children, the future of the country, wasn't it? Yet, on the other side of the channel lay the Third Reich, whose leaders, with their sadistic racial doctrines, were trying to ensure their own future with their plans for a super-race of children. England, in its modest and traditionally intransigent style, wasn't going to tolerate that!

Diana would later talk of times when she took her infant son outside with her to watch fighter planes trying to tip the short, stubby wings of the doodlebugs, hopefully to send them puttering back to their makers and, incidentally, most often depositing them on the villages and fields of Kent. Yet this was not what was to have such a deep and lasting imprint on Mein Host's developing consciousness. Fueled by fear and by events seemingly beyond his control, his spirit entered his body far earlier than what is normally considered timely. As I now understand it, this generally happens under less stressful conditions for a mortal sometime in the fourth or fifth year of planetside life.

I can only imagine that his spirit must have taken pity on the helpless child as he was crammed hurriedly under the table, waiting beside the infant for the dreadful put-put-puttering sound of the ramjet's engine to stop. Then came the worst part: a few moments of silence followed by the whining rush of wind as the missile plunged down toward the village, ending in the awful

explosion on impact.

Yet for all the terror, perhaps there was something of the Divine hand in that, too, because it was during one of those raids that my ward's young consciousness, frightened into a silent scream at the center of his being, momentarily expanded, and the child would find himself up in the top corner of the room, separated from his body and oddly serene.

Although he was certainly too young to have given it any thought at the time, his lifelong interest in transcendent levels of consciousness stems directly from those few brief moments of disembodied clarity and peace.

These constant threats also produced more unfortunate, but predictable, effects on his young mind. His undeveloped child ego wrestled with whatever it was that he might have done wrong to cause people to try to kill him. It was enough to give anyone paranoid circuits!

Then he experienced what would later be called survivor guilt. When a bomb fell on someone else's house and not on his, he wondered what he might have done that merited his being saved. Thus he became stretched on this cross of polarity, his subconscious mind filling in the gaps with a sense of specialness, a feeling that later blossomed into a conviction that he was being preserved for something important, some future destiny.

The war, like all wars, made it almost impossible for companion angels to minister responsibly to their charges. When human beings are filled with bloodlust and revenge, it makes it very difficult for angels—with our more fragile emotional bodies—to interact with, or to guide, our wards. And I'm not even a companion angel! Joy tells me that those of seraphic origin are somewhat savvier in dealing with the brutality of human emotions in this third level of density. But that is soon to change.

Without wanting to bore my reader, I would like to explain a technicality here. In the span of the seven levels of density, or dimensions, within which intelligent life resides, humans specifically occupy the first three levels with their conscious minds. Most of you will know that these seven levels coincide with the seven chakras of the human subtle energy system. Far less well understood, however, is that the chakras can also be thought of as portals to the seven primary dimensions.

The first level, aligned with the base chakra, is that of rocklike security and

groundedness; the second, governed by the second chakra, is that of procreation, of sexuality and creativity; and the third level, encompassing and modulating the first two levels, is that of power—power over self and power over others. One of the purposes of a mortal lifetime is to gain progressive mastery over all the feelings and emotions generated by anomalies in the first three chakras.

Just as it is for individuals, so it is for planets. Earth, for example, is a third-density planet as the focus has been concentrating on evolving the first three dimensions. However, as a global culture, you are now seeking collectively to move from this third level of density into the fourth—that of humanity's true natural heritage, the link between what is above and what below. It is a kingdom that is accessed through the heart chakra.

We angels locate our beingness within the fifth of these dimensions, accessible by human beings through the portal of their throat chakra. And, because the finer vibrations of the higher dimensions literally interpenetrate the denser frequencies, we are able to observe humans of our choosing, although they remain unable to perceive us with their senses. This holds true for the ajna chakra in the forehead, which allows you access to the archangels, as well as the crown chakra, which can be thought of as the inner focus of the transcendent Divine Spirit.

Human beings shouldn't expect to perceive celestials with their five senses, but they can experience us with their emotional bodies. You can feel us, even if you can't see us. And you can hear our words if you listen with an open heart and mind.

* * *

Raised in the harsh school of repression, my young Host managed to force all his terrifying memories aside and managed to live a relatively normal early childhood. Diana, now long out of British Intelligence, moved to London after the war ended in 1945 and started working in the newly created audiovisual department of Encyclopedia Britannica before realizing that she could do just as well, or better as it turned out, by going it alone.

Diana was fortunate to have inherited a series of beautifully illuminated manuscripts, the chronicle of the life of a fourteenth-century nobleman in France. These were contemporary with the weaving of the Bayeux Tapestry,

and the manuscripts showed the exquisite weaving being created in one of the illuminated panels, along with the first recorded appearance of Halley's Comet. She had the pages professionally photographed, wrote a brief description of the period, packaged them elegantly as educational filmstrips, and set about marketing them to the schools of England. The timing was perfect. She found that most teachers, weary and shell-shocked from the recent war, were only too pleased to flip on a filmstrip projector and read aloud from Diana's notes to the captivated children.

For Diana it was the start of a career that would ultimately lead her company, eventually called DW Viewpacks, to become known as the Rolls-Royce of educational filmstrips and slides. She was able to say in her old age that she was one of the few people she knew who was better off now than then and who had made her money honorably.

Mein Host, eight or nine years old by the end of the 1940s, had meanwhile embarked on the educational course of his background and generation: small and resolutely upper-class kindergartens in London followed by a boarding school at the age of seven. In the long vacation periods he was generally sent off to stay with Joyce and Norman's family, who by this time had moved from Cranbrook to Folkestone, a small coastal town on the English Channel. Due to the amount of time the boy spent in Folkestone, Norman became by default the only father my ward ever had, although neither would have looked at it in that way. In truth, they appeared to dislike each other intensely.

Norman, like almost everybody else, was thoroughly traumatized by the war. Although his family lived in Cranbrook, Norman spent most of the war in Folkestone, away from his family, because his oversight of the seawall was so vital to the defense of the South Coast. This was a daunting task, even in peacetime, with the storms and extremes of tide that rip through the narrow channel constantly undermining the concrete foundations of the harbors and seawalls. His task was made all the more demanding during the war by the hastily jettisoned bombs of retreating German bombers trying to score one last hit on England before heading back to their bases in France or Germany. One curious result of the constant danger and pressure under which Norman worked was that he became obsessed with his walls, pouring far more love and attention into them than he ever devoted to his family. The son of a harsh man—his father was a police officer—Norman became even harsher, more

authoritarian, and rigid as he fought to contain his anger and frustration. This was an anger he would frequently take out on the children with his belt or his hands. Mein Host, being the oldest and not Norman's child in the first place, bore most of the brunt of the physical abuse. They would clash frequently over that most childish of issues, vegetables—beans and peas grown by Norman on one of the tiny allotments given to townsfolk to allow them to cultivate their own foodstuffs during the war.

Being a natural rebel and, for more obscure reasons perhaps, also a picky eater, my ward found himself constantly locked in a battle of wills with his authoritarian uncle. This would frequently result in a whipping even after he openly retched at every bite. What a sad commentary on how little empathy existed in those difficult times within the confines of his cousins' family—a family from which he by now considered himself an outcast.

It was from this turmoil that I saw him turning to Susan, the eldest of his four cousins and born only months after him. Cuddles and comfort turned in time into a full-blown childhood affair of both heart and body, at least as much as nine- and ten-year-old bodies can enjoy. While his cousin to this day, perhaps not surprisingly, denies that any such thing happened between them, I can observe him sometimes remembering that early closeness with great fondness and pondering, too, the miracle of never once being caught during the two or three years it was going on.

So, yes, this helped shape his young character, especially because they got away with it. There, like little animals lying together, they kissed and stroked each other, alive with all the unexpected pleasures they both managed to find in each other. They were also satisfying a deep urge for intimacy at a time of great tension, when England was struggling to get back on its feet again after the devastation of the war.

❖ ❖ ❖

Angels are not educated in the same way as mortal beings. Because we are created for our functions, we are also created with the instinctive knowledge of how to accomplish those functions. Although it may seem odd to you reading this, we angels have not traditionally sought to increase our knowledge.

Certainly we attend the great academies in the Multiverse, but these are

more for training than education. We are expected to know our jobs. What the academies give us is the chance to practice these functions in all manner of situations that are likely to occur in the course of our duties in far-flung worlds. You could think of it as simulations and games theory.

Thus, when we do eventually take up the positions for which we have been created, we are regarded as being exquisitely trained. Never has this proved to be more important than on this unfortunate planet, as I will try to demonstrate in the telling of this story.

Not having access to the mind of Mein Host—did I forget to mention that we can only look into a normal mortal's mind when requested, and my ward had no idea of my existence, or my interest in him, until far later in his life?—I was only able to imagine what he was thinking by observing his actions and his emotional state at that point. I could see that by the time he was sent off to boarding school at around seven years old he was developing some powerful inner tensions in his psyche, generated by the combination of the early trauma inflicted when the doodlebugs were falling and when his uncle's fury was directed his way. Around the time he was packed off to Southey Hall Preparatory School, a boarding school for boys in Surrey, about fifty miles outside of London, he was cultivating a cunning streak that was to serve him well later on in life. Yet for all this, on the surface he appeared to be quite a normal, though rather shy, young English boy.

He seemed to get along well with the other boys, as he was sociable enough, and he enjoyed sports without excelling at them. The profound dislike and disrespect for authority figures, which had mainly been directed at his uncle Norman, had not yet surfaced in his character. However, I could see that being wrenched away from his mother at such an early age was toughening him up and started a process of closing his heart.

Nevertheless, they were relatively easygoing years at Southey Hall, even if the demise of the place was being surreptitiously hastened by the headmaster's long-lasting sexual molestation of a small boy in the same class as Mein Host. Not having any idea about what was going on, the other boys mercilessly teased the headmaster's favorite, as young boys will. A tragic child, his constant tears were only made more laughable by his sadly appropriate and eponymous name, Rainey. My ward has had cause several times, when the subject of pedophilia has come up in conversation, to wonder

out loud about what that poor child must have been going through and the awful cruelty of the other boys, including himself. I might add that it is the early closing down of natural kindness and compassion that becomes part of the training for the leaders of men of a so recently lost empire.

This ongoing molestation, which was to finish off Southey Hall School for good in the mid-1950s didn't come to light until a few months after Mein Host had moved on to Charterhouse, the upper-crust boarding school chosen for him by his mother in her desire to give him the best education possible. Charterhouse is one of those ancient educational institutions—up there with Eton, Harrow, Winchester, and Marlborough—that have been educating the British ruling classes for hundreds of years and are talked about as the Big Five of the English boarding schools.

Diana, you will remember, was a very determined woman, and since coming to London and starting her own business she was by now developing a wide range of friends and business contacts. Through one such friend she heard that this friend's son was accepted into Eton, and because the boy's name was also down for Charterhouse from the day of his birth, this left an opening in his class there. In this way Diana set her sights on finagling her son into this ridiculously snooty school. Her charm and spunky independence must have won the day, because within a few months, at the tender age of twelve and a half, Mein Host found himself locked into another nightmare.

2

Angelic Inspiration

The Astral Realms, Institutionalized Brutality, Sexual Repression, a Shooting, and the Spirit of Art

Angels have a natural revulsion to wanton cruelty. Granted, sometimes the truth can be cruel, but even then it is always liberating. Wanton cruelty is the product of darker, denser emotions than our delicate natures can handle. And it is never liberating. We try to look at it with compassion, but the observation of it sullies us and we find our own hearts hardening against those perpetrating it and against an authority that would allow such things to happen.

And yet we are fascinated. It is the attraction of opposites. Cruelty for its own sake is so completely foreign to us who don't seek to dominate others that we are drawn to observe it like winged insects to a flame. This is also what we fear most—being pulled down into the roiling, dank mist, churning with the thoughtforms that populate the lower astral regions of the world mind.

We are, in part, prepared for the taxing experience of coming close to mortal beings in the simulators of our training academies. I say *in part* because nothing quite prepared me for the first few times I was pulled into the lower astral realms. It was unlike anything in my angelic experience, a vibration so painful to my being that it took all my strength and focus to pass through it.

In this region lurk the particularly loathsome quasi-living thought-forms like hatred, revenge, and cruelty, which are fueled constantly by the emotionally powered thoughts of human beings in a feedback loop that is sadly self-perpetuating. This, of course, is also true for positive thoughtforms, such as love, truth, and kindness, which inhabit the higher regions of the astral planes.

This is the region referred to by different belief systems as the collective unconscious, Dreamtime, the Bardos, the astral realms, hell and heaven, or the realm of demons and angels about which Emanuel Swedenborg wrote so copiously. Within these realms a human consciousness will be drawn to those thoughtforms most relevant to her or his emotional state and spiritual progress. It is also a psychic space that acts as a buffer between the world of mortals and the less dense frequencies of the higher worlds. The reason I write *mortals* here, rather than *humans,* is that this applies in principle to the other inhabited planets, whether or not isolated. Mortals have little conscious choice but to enter the astral plane when they are asleep and dreaming; angels, in turn, are a lot more cautious about putting our toes in the water—it's not really our realm.

As I've said, only those angels who were created for such a venture and who've been highly trained would ever dream of taking on a world like this. It hadn't started that way for me. Life for all of us on Earth was continuing much as normal until Lucifer's revolution broke out on Jerusem, the capital planet of this System. I can say I find myself here as a result of the choices I made at that point. Since then I've had to learn how to manage for myself—not the easiest matter for an angel.

* * *

You'll recall that, by dint of his mother's apparent good fortune, Mein Host found himself at Charterhouse, the youngest child in a school of some 650 boys spanning ages of up to eighteen and, for some of the more obtuse lads, even older. Diana's clever accomplishment, however, soon turned ugly for my ward when, after a few months, he became caught up in a nasty case of fraternal resentment, although he didn't realize at the time what was going on. The boy who had gone on to Eton and thus had opened up a space at Charterhouse, one Bruce Barking, had an older brother named Jeremy in the same house as Mein Host—English boarding schools divide the overall student body into smaller units and are boarded together in "houses" of between fifty and eighty-five boys each.

The older Barking, now a boy of about sixteen, took what seemed to be an unhealthy interest in the young new boy. While I could see that this Barking resented that his kid brother had been sent to the even more snobby Eton and

was taking out his anger and resentment on my ward, his intentions toward Mein Host seemed friendly at first. But in the intense atmosphere of suppressed (and frequently not-so-suppressed) sexuality peculiar to boys' boarding schools, Barking's interest in my ward soon turned more prurient. Mein Host, having no idea about homosexuality and barely awakened to his own sexuality, had little clue as to what was happening—only that it annoyed and embarrassed him. In the hierarchical structure of a boarding school, the last thing my ward would have needed was to have this much more senior boy mooning around after him.

This awkward situation came to a head one day when Mein Host had gone out cycling with a couple of friends with his prize possession, a Webley air pistol, firmly stowed away in a bag on the rear rack of his beaten-up old bicycle. The three young friends had the misfortune to come across a gaggle of older boys, also on bicycles and whose number included the lovelorn Barking. The senior boy was soon trying to separate my ward from his friends and to force him off alone into the fields. Circling each other on their bicycles in the narrow country lane, the banter quickly turned unpleasant. When the hated Barking, wobbling to stay upright on his bicycle, turned away from him, Mein Host reached into the bag on the rack, pulled out his air pistol, and, from the distance of about fifteen feet, promptly shot his persecutor in the left buttock.

Now, air pistols of that type and generation are not particularly dangerous and on the whole won't break the skin, but they do have a nasty little sting. From what I observe, it is similar to a beesting without, of course, the often unpleasant aftermath.

Barking gave a sharp yelp of pain and surprise, quickly followed by roars of laughter from everyone else, including, of course, all the older boys who'd also seen what had occurred. Barking could do nothing but glare red-faced as the three younger friends rode off, cackling with laughter. The Shooting, as it came to been known throughout the house, was not an action, as my ward was to find out, destined to make him many friends in high places. For the younger boys, among whom Barking was also known as a bully and a lecher, Mein Host's unprecedented action was much more appreciated.

In the rigid hierarchy of a boarding school, junior boys in those days were completely at the mercy of senior ones. This had become institutionalized

over the generations into the “fagging” system in which the younger boys are allocated to the seniors, known in this school as monitors, to act essentially as their servants. This included such things as making tea for the monitors and keeping their studies—their small private rooms—clean, as well as being constantly at their beck and call. The younger boys also had to be available whenever a monitor yelled for a “fag” (with none of the gay connotations that word has in the United States) and would have to drop everything they were doing and run to the monitor to do his bidding without question. While this system may have instilled some humility and a sense of service in the younger boys, it also reinforced the rigidity of the gap that separated the ages and encouraged the kind of savagery and disdain with which the junior boys were regarded.

Mein Host was fortunate in one respect: the older boy, the monitor to whom he had been assigned, turned out to be a thoroughly decent human being, although not without his quirks. One of these turned out to be a German Luger 9-mm pistol that he had lifted from his father, who had in turn lifted it from a dead German soldier during the Second World War—although Mein Host was never told where it came from. After the Shooting incident, which the monitor let my ward know he thought was thoroughly justified, agreeing that Barking was a pompous idiot, he let his fag clean his precious gun.

Barking, incensed by the humiliation and smarting from the rejection of his advances, became a mortal enemy of Mein Host. While waiting until he, too, became a monitor and could use that position to really hurt my ward (and others by this time—he was not a popular person), Barking appeared to back down and leave the younger boy alone. Or, so it appeared. However, I observed that many of the small, unpleasant incidents that occurred in Mein Host’s life were emanating directly from the poison spread about him by his nemesis.

On one occasion, Mein Host and his two closest friends (the very two with whom he was out bicycling on the afternoon of the Shooting) were called into their housemaster’s study and accused—wholly without justification, I might add—of engaging in homosexual relations. Their claims of innocence were ignored and they were promptly beaten, one by one, harshly and painfully, with a cane. Although my ward hasn’t known this until now—indeed, he

didn’t even suspect it—I saw at the time that Barking’s malicious tongue had led to convincing the house-master of the boys’ alleged offense.

At this point Mein Host, now in his fourteenth year, finally lost all respect for his so-called elders and betters. He suffered from the absence of a father in his life and a mother too busy and focused on building up a company to share much of her time with men. His only real male role models were a sadly damaged uncle and a stream of largely authoritarian teachers. He must have realized that anything he was going to accomplish in life would be no thanks to them. He clearly knew he had to develop a sense of self-reliance to a point where he simply didn’t need the support and encouragement of anyone in the older generation, that he couldn’t look to anyone outside himself for help of any sort, and from here on he would have to rely solely on his own intelligence and cunning.

Before I go on to outline the events that so profoundly shaped my ward’s early life, I should say that I hadn’t really joined with him yet. Joined him, yes, but not with the level of intimacy that we have achieved later in his life. I am not a companion angel, you see. I don’t inhabit his inner space, as do his two companion angels, but I can observe and sometimes offer comfort.

We first drew near to each other as I tried to comfort him in his pain and loneliness, when as a small child he would find himself out of his body and up in the corner of the room, while the flying bombs came crashing down. I tried hard to comfort him, but I feared that my presence would upset him, so I never ventured too close. Those were also the last times we were together in spirit for a long time, although, as he was my chosen mortal, I continued to observe him.

Our instructions are very clear: we are not to interfere in any way with a mortal’s chosen life unless very unusual circumstances arise or we are consciously invited in for help or support. This latter is more complicated than it sounds, because the request has to be aligned with higher spiritual purposes for us to be able help in any way. Frivolous demands or, as is mostly the case, prayers for miraculous healings will almost always go ignored, because the disease itself is frequently the lesson needed. Where we have proved most useful to our mortal friends and allies is in helping in the release of the fear-impacted thoughtforms that humans carry around with them like emotional parasites in their auric fields. But even that requires the

human to be spiritually developed and open-minded enough to entertain the reality of an angel, while at the same time focusing enough energy and conscious intention to allow the angel to do the necessary healing work. This is a rare combination. Indeed, there are some human religious traditions—Jewish Kabbalah, for one—that insist a person be a mature male, over fifty years old, and a serious student of life before even considering communing with an angel.

Charterhouse did not exactly house such people, and, in those increasingly irreligious times, talking with angels would have been considered in very poor taste, if it would have been considered at all. No, Charterhouse in the 1950s was known for something different, as Mein Host had already discovered to his misfortune. The school was quietly infamous for being a hotbed of adolescent sex, pubescent longings either channeled into sports or expressed in childlike crushes that, as often as not, turned into full-blown sexual activity. But, as it is with sex in prison, most of the encounters had less to do with affection than with dominance.

This sexual bullying—exemplified and fueled by the constant pressure of the frustrated malice, the covert remarks, and the behind-the-scenes machinations of his nemesis—horrified my ward.

After two years of this, and by now in his fourteenth year, Mein Host had the first of what were later to become a series of awakenings. It is hard to say what precipitated them, because the injustices to which he fell prey were so plentiful, but from my vantage point I could see the psychic tension building in him.

What I believe pushed him over the edge was an afternoon he spent with his mother, who had set aside time in her busy schedule for a day and had traveled down to the nearby village of Godalming by train. He cycled down the hill from the school to the village to meet her, and together they went to a local tearoom. There he had tried to tell her how truly dreadful life was at school, but after all she had gone through to get him there—all the hard work and the connections and the plain good luck—she wasn’t able to take it in. Too embarrassed to talk freely about the sexual brutality to his mother, he backed down as gracefully as he could.

Growing up without a father, Mein Host had developed a particular closeness to his mother, which was encouraged by her tendency to treat him

like an adult. She included him in all the family decisions, and from the time he was eleven she liked to tell him what was happening in the business. He understood, more than anyone, what she had put herself through to get him into the wretched school, and he knew at this point that he could scarcely turn his back on all her efforts. His natural kindness, and his willingness to endure pain if it protected other people, kept him from hurting his mother.

When he returned to the school and was lying awake later that night in his cubicle—the dormitories were divided into small private cubicles just large enough for a bed and a dresser, each with a small window—the realization came to him. With a horrible, deadening feeling, he knew was trapped in the worst sort of prison camp—one in which the inmates were so deadened, so bewildered**,** that they had no idea they were actually in a prison. He could see the schoolboys in his mind's eye, moving like zombies through their days, controlled by their fears and their greeds, and when those manipulations didn't work, then through casual brutality and institutionalized violence.

Much has been written about the appalling abuses practiced at most English boarding schools since the taboo of not talking about it was broken during the past thirty years. Now the spirit of fairness has largely been reinstated, significantly enough, by the presence of girls. Charterhouse, along with some of the other boarding schools, went coed in the 1970s, and although there may well be other dynamics brought to bear by mixing the sexes, there can never again be that painful, pressure-cooker atmosphere of raw adolescent male sexuality. When this was mixed together with the ever-present threat of corporal punishment and the constant bullying demands of most of the senior boys, themselves brutalized while coming up through the ranks, life for most boys was a living hell.

Now fourteen and a half years old, Mein Host woke up from his trance of childhood to find himself trapped in this hell. What made it worse was that there was no one to talk to about it. Naturally, there was the normal amount of moaning from the junior boys, but no one seemed to grasp the full enormity of the injustice that surrounded them on a daily basis. There was also the macho factor—young boys not wanting to betray their true feelings lest they be labeled sissies, or worse. My ward soon realized that, once again, he was not going to get any support or encouragement from anyone outside himself. If he was going to survive these next few years, he was going to

have to keep his wits about him. Not surprisingly, he also found himself wanting to spend a lot more time on his own.

Humans often wonder where certain ideas come from—I hear them saying that such and such seemed to come “out of the blue” or “totally from left field” or “the last thing I would have thought.” Of course, the human mind does have a fertile imagination and many unconscious levels of creativity. But certain ideas, if they are aligned with the higher purpose of the individual concerned, may be implanted by angels. In this case, the urge to draw that Mein Host began to feel so strongly was placed in his mind by the secondary (and more silent) of his two companion angels, whom he calls Beauty.

For those who are concerned that a human being’s mental territory has in some way been violated—“If angels can do that, then what else can they drop into our minds?”—I must note once more that this is only permitted when the idea or concept is in accordance with the life path mapped out for that particular soul before incarnation. My ward had chosen the path of the artist, although he didn’t know it until much later in his life.

So seemingly out of thin air for Mein Host came this deep desire to draw, and not only to draw, but very specifically to draw the small Norman churches that dot the Surrey countryside. He finally found his solace and inspiration in the quiet churchyards, his back set against a gravestone warmed by the sun, drawing the twelfth- and thirteenth-century stone towers and buttressed walls. At these times his mind would open up and become free of all the frenzied activity of life at school. He was able to ponder those deeper issues that so preoccupy thoughtful adolescents. Who am I? Where do I come from? Is there life after death? Have I lived before? Is there a God? These questions are vitally important to the young, developing mind, and yet ones so easily forgotten later in the tumult of everyday adult life.

By contrast, murder and killing, as you might imagine, have been all but completely forgotten on planets more advanced than this one. Murder doesn’t even appear in the laws of some worlds, because the planetary citizens have themselves brought their emotional bodies under their full control.

Such violence is also unknown in the angelic realms. This goes for the tools of violence as well, and although I have been observing humans for a long time, I find that I’m still fascinated by the extremes of emotion—or the total lack of it (which I find less interesting)—that produce such violence. I

suspect this intense interest I have in human violence is part of the training protocol we Watchers have to undergo in preparation for incarnation—a gradual toughening of our rather feeble emotional bodies.

For Mein Host, his particular fascination with guns started with an ack-ack, anti-aircraft artillery battery at the end of the garden of his mother's house in Cranbrook. He would run down the lawn, his eyes glazed with excitement, as the long-barrel guns pumped explosive shells up at the German bombers, his head back watching the pretty little puffs of smoke way up there in the heavens bracketing the planes as the gunners fixed their range and speed. He felt, as did the gunners, a superhuman power at being able to reach into the sky and magically create devastation at such a distance.

At night searchlights groped beneath the clouds to finally lock on to, for example, a damaged German Junker, sputtering back from a raid on London. The ack-ack would start up, seemingly just outside his bedroom, and he would run to the window and open it wide to smell the cordite that came in waves of fine smoke when the wind was just right. He'd hang out of the window to catch a glimpse of the sweaty, grimacing faces of the gunners, frozen for brief moments in the muzzle flashes of the guns. All too rarely were the guns effective, but when they were, and if the bomber was unfortunate enough not yet to have delivered its load, then the sky would light up in a magnificent explosion. At other times, black smoke would pour from the back of a plane, and the crew lucky enough to have got out would drift down slowly on their silk canopies to be welcomed by farmers with pitchforks, while their forsaken bomber plowed into a field miles away.

So, with this in his background, it came as no surprise that Mein Host acquired a simple air pistol that he kept hidden in Folkestone at his cousins' house. It didn't have the power, or the accuracy, of the Webley pistol he bought a few years later, because it fired small round projectiles about the size and shape of lead shot. But it worked well enough close at hand in the fights he would provoke with the other local kids. It was also powerful enough to kill small birds if he was able to creep close enough.

Mercifully, he never took great pleasure in killing on those infrequent occasions when he was able to hit a bird, but he felt again the power in his hands and prided himself on his growing accuracy.

His cousin Christopher reminded him many years later of an occasion in which they'd been out together in the country as children and had spotted a bird at the very top of a tall tree a couple of hundred feet away—an improbably long distance. In one of those Zen moments, Mein Host's hand came up with the gun and fired almost without taking aim. The bird fell out of the tree dead, to the frank amazement of the boys.

This was not a happy memory for my ward, as his killing came to an abrupt halt one day a few years after the Zen incident with the bird. This sad event occurred in a still-unreconstructed London when he was on his own, whiling away the time in the large residential gardens opposite the apartment block in which his mother lived and worked.

Although the apartment was large and elegant, at the corner of London's Sloane and Pont Streets, it was in fact a council flat that Diana had obtained in the general chaos after the war. Mein Host lived there throughout his adolescence when he wasn't at boarding school or staying with his cousins in Folkestone or his other cousins in Ireland.

Traveling down Sloane Street now, you'll see the gardens on the left-hand side, with their lawns, their cultivated flowerbeds, a couple of tennis courts, and the few old-growth trees that survived the German bombs. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, however, the gardens were a war-destroyed mess, a tangle of bomb craters, concrete pillboxes, and decaying gun emplacements. Stinging nettles and brambles overran the ground, because tending to the gardens was the last thing on people's minds as they struggled to get back on their feet after the war.

As a young child, it was a terrifying spot for Mein Host, full of dank, dark places and broken things, the gleam of shell casings and the occasional unexploded piece of ordnance. My ward would dare himself to go farther and farther, to penetrate into the very heart of each secret place until he had faced every demon lurking there. That seemed to be the plan, anyway.

On one such exploration he shot the pigeon. But it just wouldn't die. It was a shamefully close shot to begin with, so the poor bird fell at his feet, flapping in the brambles while he struggled to reload his gun—a tiresomely long operation in a single-shot air pistol of that vintage—and fired and fired and fired. Nothing seemed to put the little creature out of its misery until nature itself took over and it died with its bright eye fixed on its fevered

assassin.

I am relieved to report that Mein Host was appropriately horrified with himself and has never wantonly killed animals ever again.

However, his interest in guns also took him in more legitimate directions.

Over at the edge of the Charterhouse playing fields and at the bottom of the steep hill on which the old school stood, but still within the school grounds, was the .22-caliber rifle range. It was a long, dark building, as might be expected, with a line of sandbags at the shooters' end and a dirt floor separating a row of targets that were brightly lit at the other end of the range. He didn't discover the rifle range until a year and a half after he arrived at the school, because shooting wasn't yet a popular activity in his house. The swimming pool, however, with its unheated water and dank changing rooms, lay on the other side of the road that coiled down the hill, so the boys could see the rifle range to their right as they jogged down the hill to attend the compulsory swimming periods. Mein Host was taught to swim back at Southey Hall in the time-honored fashion of being thrown into the deep end of a very cold and ill-kept outdoor pool, awash with dead leaves.

He hadn't taken happily to the aquatic life.

At Charterhouse the boys were naked during the swimming periods. My ward, at thirteen and a half, was a skinny little creature who, like many adolescents, was acutely self-conscious about his thin and vulnerable body. Consequently, when he heard that he could substitute shooting for swimming in the curriculum, it didn't take him long to make his way down to the range and start learning how to shoot a rifle.

As any who have tried this will know, rifle shooting on a range is a matter of cool precision, focus, and, above all, self-reliance. There is no one else but you, the shooter, responsible for the shot. This factor, as much as anything else, dovetailed with what he was emotionally going through in his life at school, so he threw himself into the sport with sufficient energy to quickly become a champion marksman. His rapid success encouraged a couple of his contemporaries to take it up, too, and they also became superb marksmen. So much so that the three boys started winning all sorts of unexpected honors, putting their house back in the lead among the other houses after a long period when competitive shooting held little interest.

I bring this up not simply because I am proud of my young charge for the focused concentration he was able to bring to rifle shooting, but because his very success at this somewhat obscure school activity exacerbated the amount of undesirable attention he was receiving from those who already resented him. Mein Host wasn't aware of the resentment his success stirred up in the vengeful Barking, who by this time had risen in the school hierarchy to become a junior monitor. He was now in an even better position to persecute the younger boy.

I mentioned with some pride how we angels were able to stimulate Mein Host's interest in drawing the churches. Let's be fair, the deeper intention was to encourage him to spend more time alone, in peaceful and sacred places. While this worked wonders for his peace of mind, it also created an unfortunate downside, which was to further shape my young ward's character.

I'll ask you to be patient for a moment while I try to explain the odd system of physical containment at Charterhouse. The boys were permitted to walk or bicycle anywhere in the immediate environment of the school, within boundaries delineated by railroad tracks. Crossing these tracks caused the offending boy to be "out of bounds," and he was severely punished if caught. Although inherently confusing by dint of the tracks that ran through long tunnel systems, so that a boy could say in all innocence he had no idea he was out of bounds, the rules were still rigidly enforced. Ignorance of the law was no excuse, and school monitors made it their business to patrol the tracks in a cat-and-mouse game with the more adventurous of the younger boys.

Given the tale I'm telling, it shouldn't be surprising to you to learn that all but one or two of the medieval churches stood well outside the rather limited boundary set by the railroad tracks. Mein Host, with the rebellious determination of adolescence, decided to ignore what he clearly felt were absurd rules—rules that certainly didn't apply to him anyway—and spend as many long summer afternoons as possible in churchyards, wherever he could find them. The railroad tracks and the arbitrary law made no difference to him.

Of course, this resulted in the predictable occurring. He was caught—over and over again—and beaten—over and over again. Yet even as he was

beaten, his young will was clearly hardening, and he determined once again, in his pain, never to surrender. Then he would go out and do it all over again. I even caught the drift of some talk of expelling the boy. But by that time he was such an asset to the school's shooting team that, in the way of all corrupt and self-interested regimes, that idea was quietly shelved. The response to his recalcitrance was to simply go on beating him. Scarcely surprisingly, his schoolwork also suffered badly—he was one of those youngsters who is good at only what he's interested in and rebellious enough to see nothing wrong with that.

Mein Host was starting to develop what can only be called a criminal mentality. He had become so profoundly disillusioned with the barbaric and authoritarian ways of the school, while simultaneously feeling trapped there by his mother's best intentions, that he decided his only resort was cunning. His only way to emerge from this hell intact was to make sure to outwit them all.

He soon found that he had a natural talent for forgery, which required much the same capacity for focus and precision as target shooting. Report cards needed to be written and signed by the teacher of a class on the conduct of the offending boy during that class. Boys would have up to eight classes a day. The most common punishment for misbehavior or inattention was one or sometimes two weeks of having to sidle up to the teacher at the end of the class and have him write and sign a brief conduct report. If it was negative when the report cards were turned in to the housemaster, it would mean a beating at the end of the day, and the assignment of yet a further couple of weeks' humiliation.

Because Mein Host was so often on this punishing regimen, his teachers easily lost track of whether they'd written and signed the forms at the end of the classes. He soon found that with a little practice he was able to forge a brief comment and a signature from any one of the five or six teachers who were liable to castigate him. Sometimes four or five out of the eight separate teachers' comments were carefully crafted by the young forger and shown to the unsuspecting housemaster at the end of the day.

He was never once caught in the two years of regularly forging teachers' statements and signatures. This was as much a criticism of most teachers' indifference as it was a sign of Mein Host's growing cynicism and capacity

for mischief. There were some ridiculously close calls, as you might imagine, in the closely knit interactions of school life, but the possibility that a boy would ever try to pull off anything so outrageous, time and time again, appeared never to have occurred to those in power.

Mein Host's opinion of authority figures was already low—not without reason—but now came the dawning of a realization that if he applied himself he could achieve at least some measure of satisfaction by tricking them, and proving, at least to himself, they were the sadistic fools he believed them to be.

One of the saddest aspects of our life as angels is how very little is known on this planet about what we might call the transcendent reality. Most of the great religious books contain elements of the truth without any one of them portraying the transcendent reality as it really is. While I can appreciate that this fragmentation is the inevitable result of an isolated world, starved of a larger Multiverse vision, it has also promoted generations of priesthoods, all with the dogmatic conviction that they alone have the "truth."

Mein Host, who by the age of fifteen had been reading some psychology and philosophy for his own pleasure, was to have his next encounter with authority in the house of the priest who was training the students of that particular year for their confirmation. This is considered a rite of passage in the Church of England that most highborn schoolboys are expected to go through a couple of years after puberty.

In a class of about twenty-five largely passive young males, mostly uninterested in the dogma and anxious to get out onto the playing fields to join their friends, it fell to Mein Host to ask the pointed questions. After half a term of this, the priest officiating became so incensed by the questions, and so embarrassed by his inability to give satisfactory answers, that he angrily accused Mein Host of disrupting the class. The priest then threw the boy out and refused to confirm him. Contrary to the disgrace this move was designed to engender, the young rebel was happily relieved and resolved that, after all, he must be an atheist.

This view started appearing, without ever coming to a full flower, during his prep school years, prompted by the awful, soul-deadening services the

boys were forced to attend every Sunday of the school year. His turn toward atheism became even more pronounced in the face of sermons rambling endlessly on in the bitter cold of an unheated fourteenth-century church in the local village; the turgid rituals with their emphasis on guilt, sin, and self-denial; the halfhearted singing of hymns seeming to encourage militarism ("Onward Christian soldiers . . .") in a religion purportedly of peace and love; and the many contradictions that were to prompt Mein Host into asking all those unanswerable questions of the priest at his confirmation class some years later.

The same dreary routine was repeated when he arrived at Charterhouse. There, in the large and rather finely designed but equally chilly chapel, the entire school would gather twice a day for morning and evening prayers, with the main service being on Sunday.

Into this unfortunate mix of boredom and repugnance came a boy a few months younger than Mein Host whom I'll call Elliott and who appeared to make it his personal quest to convert Mein Host to Christianity. Elliott was exceptionally brilliant at schoolwork and was generally disliked because the other boys viewed him as a swot and a sissy. To compound Elliott's social disadvantages, he was also very small, barely five feet tall, and delicately built. Given Mein Host's already well-entrenched repugnance toward the practice of Christianity, it was all he needed to have some little boy chasing after him trying to argue the finer points of the Christian faith. The pressure he felt from the diminutive Elliott only served to harden his heart even further to the idea of God and religion in general. Yet he continued to avidly read philosophy and psychology, as well as working his way through the great Russian and French novels by the time he was sixteen.

The repressed passion experienced by young male adolescents without recourse to female company prompts odd consequences—among them cruelty and injustice. But in Mein Host this repressed passion was having some unusual effects. The obvious contradiction between his antipathy for organized religion and his delight at spending long, hot afternoons in churchyards seemed to stimulate his youthful curiosity. His creative drive was not yet articulated—he had no interest, for instance, in attending art classes at the well-equipped school studio—and mainly involved building the balsa-wood model aircraft that almost all schoolboys of that era made before

the age of prefabrication, television, and the consumerist culture. Apart from learning precision and patience, he found early on that the glue used to stick the contraptions together produced an intriguing effect on him if he either ate or sniffed it. Nothing really spectacular, of course, but a definite precursor of what he was going to encounter some years later when he came to explore entheogens like peyote, LSD-25, and DMT.

Mein Host's sexual energy, after its brief expression in those early years with his cousin Susan, now lay largely hidden within and was closed off to the attentions of other boys. His encounters with the predatory Barking and others of his ilk taught him to keep to himself when he didn't have to fight them off. He wasn't to know until much later in his life that one of the most traumatic situations he'd faced in his most recent past life was rape at the hands of a sadistic Turkish prison governor. It's little wonder he was defending his honor so forcefully.

This fighting spirit came to a head one night sometime in his fifteenth year. By this time his nemesis had become head monitor, finally giving him the authority to formally thrash the younger boys when required to do so by the arcane rules of the school.

A brief word about the hierarchy of violence that ruled at Charterhouse in the 1950s. Starting with the most dire of offenses, just short of those considered worthy of expulsion (admittedly a rather rare event, because it was thought to reflect poorly on the school and it was simpler to brutalize the boy), the school's headmaster would administer the beating. For a serious crime that involved activity within the house, the housemaster could be heard to mutter that jewel of hypocrisy, "This'll hurt me more than it'll hurt you!" before he laid into the thrashing. And for relatively minor offenses, whippings were administered by the head monitor of that particular house.

It isn't hard to figure out that a beating by a powerfully built, fit, and aggressive eighteen-year-old with a chip on his shoulder is going to be a great deal more painful than one from a middle-aged, overweight schoolmaster who'd beaten many too many boys over his long teaching career. And so it was. A head monitor could become known for his particularly cruel ways, one of which was to lay the blows of the cane in exactly the same place at each stroke. This not only maximized the pain but would frequently draw

blood. Although this deliberate cruelty was not strictly permitted, the macho spirit and the potential for teasing the weak ensured that no one revealed the secret.

I can illustrate this best by describing the incident that finally brought the confrontation between Mein Host and his nemesis to a ghastly head on a cold winter's night in 1955. Whatever the infraction was Mein Host has long forgotten, but I observed that it was his defiant determination to go beyond the railroad tracks yet again to draw his beloved churches. He was spotted by one of the monitors and reported.

When, many years later, he told the details of the story of his final beating to an American friend, Robert Faust, he was met with such a level of disbelief that it was immediately obvious that an American education was somewhat less rigorous. The institutionalized brutality was both shocking and utterly foreign to Bobby, safely raised in middle-class American schools.

As was the custom, the offending boy—in this case Mein Host—would be told he would be punished three days hence. This was judged to be the appropriate time for a boy to reflect on his crime, but, in reality, it was calibrated to create the maximum amount of fear and tension in the buildup to the evening in question. The practice of repression came in handy here, because to betray any nervousness was to invite the scorn of the other boys.

As the evening drew closer it became almost impossible for a boy to concentrate on any of the school's activities, as his thoughts quite naturally drifted to the torture ahead. It would take someone with nerves of steel not to be affected. Boys would often become so distracted by the anticipation that they'd do something foolish during this waiting period, which, in turn, would cause them to be punished for that additional offense.

It was a harsh way of raising children, designed more to break their spirits than to educate, and justified by the so-called dog-eat-dog world the lads would be entering when they left the school. But to follow Mein Host, a shy fifteen-year-old, on this one night is to understand the immensity of the lie beneath this rationalization.

The time is about 11:20 p.m., soon after the house closes down activity for the day. The place is Gownboys House, one of the four "old houses" occupying the massive, faux-gothic structure built in the late 1870s on sixty-eight acres on top of a hill outside the small town of Godalming.

The lights go out as the boys settle into their cubicles. After about half an hour, the steps of one of the junior monitors is heard scraping and rasping along the long corridor separating the lines of cubicles in this one of the three dormitories in the house. The monitor doesn't try to be silent. His harsh knock and peremptory command for the boy to come with him is followed by a nervous fumbling with the dressing-gown cord as Mein Host hastily tries to knot it around his waist. He can hear the stifled breathing of the other thirty boys wide awake in their cubicles, listening for the slightest whimper, and relishing the fact that it isn't them shuffling unhappily down the hallway behind the junior monitor.

The stone steps of the ancient turret staircase—each step worn into a smooth convex curve by scores of years of boys' feet—seep cold up through the soles of his thin slippers. He needs to control the shaking of his legs as they descend to the ground floor. Then he trudges along the flagstones of the wide corridor with its stone arches.

He knows the encounter is going to occur in the house dining room from his many previous beatings, the long tables and benches moved back against the wall. The junior monitor opens the door and ushers Mein Host into the large bare space, its walls covered with the names of generations of boys who'd won prestige for Gownboys.

There is a single wooden chair set on its own in the middle of the room. To his left, as Mein Host enters the room, stands a line of monitors, all eight of them—the senior boys in the house who are required to attend the beatings, no doubt to toughen them up for when their turn may come to be the head monitor.

His nemsis stands in the middle and a little in front of them, as befits his position. He is smacking his hand with a long willow cane in anticipation of his coming pleasure. There is something in the air, even Mein Host can feel it through his dread. The other monitors are shuffling their feet nervously. Have they been discussing the boy and his impossibly rebellious nature just before he entered?

He is told to take off his dressing gown and to drop his pajama trousers. He knows he's required to lean over the back of the chair and grip the wooden rails supporting the legs. He can hear the head monitor behind him, making his move, taking his time, then the quick, indrawn breath and the hissing of

the cane cutting through the air, before a searing pain explodes through his thin body.

He forces himself not to make a sound, knowing that screams could be heard echoing throughout the old building. His nemesis draws back for another blow, and there it is, in exactly the same spot, even more painful than the first one. Again and again, the monitor strikes, four, five, six; Mein Host is holding his breath by this time, his fingernails gouging into his hands and desperately biting his tongue as he tries to grip the rails to keep from screaming.

He knows a head monitor is only permitted to hit him six times, eight at the very most, for the most heinous of crimes. Yet the beating continues—eight, nine, ten, eleven strokes. He can hear his tormentor panting and grunting as he though he can't strike fast enough. At twelve, or thirteen—Mein Host has lost count by now in the red haze of pain—he hears the scuffle of feet and an angry muttering coming from behind him. As he agonizingly straightens himself up, he turns and can see the other monitors physically pulling a struggling head monitor away from him.

Mein Host remembers to this day the spasmodic jerking of the man's arm, the cane now whipping through empty air, his voice a strangled gibberish, as the other monitors grapple with his limbs.

Pulling his pajamas back over his bleeding bottom, Mein Host slowly puts his dressing gown back on before taking his time knotting the cord and limping out of the room, still without making a sound.

He was never beaten again after that evening. This time he knew too much.

He also decided after that evening that he would never allow himself to be put in the position of those sad-eyed monitors, let alone be the one to administer the whipping. He determined to leave Charterhouse before that awful possibility would ever present itself.

3

Revolution among the angels

Human Origins, Independence of Mind, Fifth-Dimensional Bodies, the Prince's Arrival, and Sexual Awakenings

I imagine you'll want to know, at some point, just what a rather independent-minded angel came to be doing here on this planet. Well, it goes back a long way.

This is bound to come as shock to many modern-thinking people, but this world is cared for by forces larger and more powerful than you can know. The Multiverse is, by and large, a friendly and benign place in which angels know their functions and responsibilities, and millions of planetary civilizations are tended and fostered.

Although my field of expertise doesn't extend to any details, and I certainly wasn't around when it happened, I do know that life was seeded on this planet when the Most Highs considered it ready for implantation. I say this with certainty, because this is the established way of things. Planets are formed for the purpose of supporting life. The lifestream virtually never emerges spontaneously, and only then when certain spores drift through interplanetary space.

Contrary to what many of your scientists have come to believe, the lifestream is extremely carefully designed and implemented by a select group of angels called the Life Carriers. Of course, this happens billions of years before any of us were destined to arrive. The principle of genetic evolution is used to move from the original raw life implant up through increasingly sophisticated life-forms. This continues until the higher mammalian forms emerge as the evolutionary imperative and environmental factors force high intelligence out of the long, dark night of feuding and dominion.

As the reptiles of the dinosaur era gave way to the mammals, this was helped largely by the impact of a massive meteor permitted to strike the

surface of the planet. In the ensuing chaos, the widespread vulcanism and tidal waves, and in dust storms that circled in the atmosphere for years afterward, the large reptiles died away from starvation and the cold. Being cold-blooded creatures, like lizards, they needed their time in the sun.

The small mammals, more agile and already scavenging and burrowing, survived the catastrophe by diversifying. One little lemurlike creature became the direct antecedent of more than 190 different mammalian forms, including the one that would eventually become the physical basis of human beings as you now know them. As genetically preprogrammed by the Life Carriers, these first humans suddenly started appearing from among the families of higher primates. More in line, perhaps, with the evolutionary theory of punctuated equilibrium, this intended mutation occurred extremely rapidly. The first humans, seeming to emerge spontaneously, looked much more similar to modern human beings than most people are inclined to believe. Perhaps more fearful and timid, but you would recognize the bright light of intelligence in their eyes. They were said to have even developed a language together, these wonderful creatures, although their parents hadn’t the vocal cords to duplicate their sounds or the intelligence to know what their odd offspring were babbling about.

Surely a stranger situation would be hard to imagine unless you were one of those young changelings living now and called, among other things, the Indigo or Crystal Children, the Psychic Children, or even Homo Delphinus, and who must surely regard their parents in somewhat the same light as those first humans growing up in families of mute apes.

As is the way in the living Multiverse, profound advances in evolutionary life often devolve down to single entities, or, in this case, a pair—a brother and sister. I won’t go into telling their story as it is recorded elsewhere and also because it predates my arrival in this world by some half a million years.

Indeed, by the time my colleagues and I were posted here, human beings were breeding and multiplying over large areas of the landmass. The various human races were establishing themselves. Some exterminated others, while others gradually learned that the spirit of cooperation was more productive—safer and more fun, too. This trait of organized cooperation enabled them to eke out a tenuous existence in a predatory world, encouraging the various clans and races to pursue greater feats of ingenuity.

Humans were starting to think for themselves.

I don’t recall what the precise sign turned out to be. One day we were training on the architectural world I regarded as my home, and the next I was being chosen out of the vast numbers of volunteers for the job of going planetside and getting into the real work—the work for which we’d all been so painstakingly prepared. I can recall, however, my surprise at being chosen over all those others. They told me later that there were more than 700,000 volunteers for each available position. Perhaps this hints at just how ready and willing we were to come down here and try to make a difference.

Although I had already been created as an angel, I found myself over time developing a somewhat unconstrained turn of mind. I was starting to feel a new sense of liberation. With what I know in retrospect, I can now see that it might have been this trait of personal independence—so frowned on by most of my contemporaries and teachers—that prompted my selection. I couldn’t appreciate this at the time, of course, and even worried they might have chosen the wrong angel for the job. I was that astonished. But, naturally, they hadn’t got it wrong. They simply knew some things I didn’t understand until much later.

If I harp on about independence in this chronicle, it’s because personal freedom has become a central theme in all our lives—those of both angels and humans—since the time of the great revolution. Over the centuries of ensuing planetary isolation, humans have become progressively more aware of their cosmic aloneness until this point in time, when it is generally thought that belief in angels and extraterrestrials is the arena of the deluded or the exploited.

While in one way this has made the work of angels more complicated and mysterious, it has also fostered a refreshingly autonomous turn of mind in many people. Although MA claims that they decided to isolate the System and the rebelling planets to stop the insurrection from spreading, I can only assume that the authorities ultimately intended to produce a strong and independent race of human beings. I have even heard it suggested by a sister revolutionary that Lucifer was responsible for isolating the System to protect us all from the possibility of MA actively taking its revenge on the defaulting planets.

Official Multiverse documents note that the main players in Lucifer's rebellion were given their posts almost a quarter of a million years before the outbreak of the Systemwide uprising and were all chosen—significantly as I have come to believe—for their much-remarked-upon "independence of mind."

Now, countless generations later, I watch my young Host struggling to define himself; assaulted on all sides at school by brutality, hypocrisy, and envy; and courting disaster in his own devious way. Yet, for all that, I could see that he was following his own path toward a liberated way of thinking. This was not to blossom until he went to architectural school two or three years later. But I am jumping ahead of myself—I warned you that I was likely to do that.

I have to admit that I took some pleasure in the boy's attitude, which I could see had to be very constrained. I thought he handled the isolation a great deal better than I did when the feelings of independence first came over me. Like him, I could see my colleagues going about their business, seemingly quite unaware of what was happening deep inside us.

Well, I say deep. But angels don't go that deep—at least not in an emotionally developed way. That was perhaps the most surprising thing of all, something that seemed to happen to all of us dissenters, a Voice that opened up inside each of us and spoke in the language of Light. What the Voice talked about was often not what we were taught in the Melchizedek universities. I've come to believe it was this Voice, more than anything else, that encouraged so many angels into open revolution against the forces of the Multiverse Administration.

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For Mein Host, this growing independence of mind led to a great deal of loneliness or "time to be alone," as he came to think of it. Shipped out on the long school holidays to an aunt and uncle in Ireland, his only friends a goat and a dog, he would wander the windblown cliffs of the Atlantic shores of County Limerick almost ecstatic in his newfound sense of selfhood. The mind games with his nemesis had ended when the senior boy had finally left school to move on to university.

Mein Host was starting to excel at that most individual of sports, target

shooting, and was now representing Charterhouse at the annual inter-school competition at the army rifle ranges at Bisley, in Surrey. This was the most important event in the shooting world for the schools nationwide, and unlike most sporting events, the winner can be determined in one long afternoon. Naturally, this prompted the sort of attention that the longer rhythms of competitive sports, like soccer, cricket, hockey, and basketball, don't create, because it takes months for all the schools to play one another. On the day of the great shooting competition, money can be seen to change hands in the schools, and the heroes have their brief moment in the sun.

Mein Host was as surprised as anybody when he scored a "possible" (the highest possible score) in one of the rounds at Bisley. While he didn't go on to win the overall competition, his exceptional score was one of the factors that led to his being awarded his school "colors," as well as the privilege of wearing a white, V-neck sweater adorned with the clashing pink and blue stripes that are the traditional colors of Charterhouse.

In addition, his name was one of the few added that year to the wood panels lining the walls of the refectory, to the names of local heroes going back for generations—and in the very room in which he'd been so often humiliated and beaten. The irony was not lost on him. Not only was he outwitting them, now he had the cover of success to work behind.

* * *

Nothing much was said about the future when, about 500,000 years ago, the Prince and his staff were readying themselves for the tasks ahead. The one hundred lucky members of the Prince's group were having their new planetside bodies prepared for them by surgeons, specialists flown in from the planet of Avalon deep in the Pleiades star cluster. Beautiful bodies they were, too, culled from the biological DNA of life on your planet, but with a number of specific modifications allowing the staff almost limitless life spans.

Entropy being what it is, even the most perfect life-forms fall to pieces in time. To enjoy this virtual immortality, they needed to eat the fruit of a shrub that was shipped in specially for them from a planet with a higher vibratory frequency than Earth. This then permitted the Prince's staff and, most generously, also the one hundred fine specimens of planetary humans, fifty

male and fifty female, who contributed their bioplasm for the staff ’s physical bodies, to biologically interconnect with particular incoming cosmic rays. Thus, by eating the fruit they would become instantly rejuvenated. They were, for all intents and purposes, immortal.

A word about Prince Caligastia and his colleague, Daligastia, around whom the staff clustered and whom they regarded as their de facto leaders: both were Descending Sons and were much more senior in position to those posted to them as their staff. They, too, were chosen from many thousands of others of their rank for this onerous task. Those of us who knew Prince Caligastia at the time regarded him as being a very odd choice, as he was already known to be remarkably independent (there we go again) in his own right. Something was definitely afoot. Because no one noticed these qualities in common at the time, I suspect that we were telepathically veiled as a group —by whom I can only guess.

I want to try to keep the details of this thoroughly complicated piece of interdimensional intervention as simple as possible, because it is in our angelic nature to list every little detail of every transaction—it’s probably one of the things we do best. But certain matters need to be known and appreciated for you to gain a wider understanding of what has been happening on and around this planet for the past half a million years.

It appears to be standard Multiverse practice, for example, to send what can only be called a team of intraterrestrials down to a planet at exactly the point at which the indigenous life—in this case your distant ancestors—have proved themselves intelligent enough to value outside influences. Only one hundred of these intraterrestrial beings are chosen—fifty males and fifty females. They are regarded as particularly suitable to the art of working with human beings, because all of them had, until recently, been mortal beings on other planets in the Local System.

The hundred who became the Prince’s staff had gone through death on the planet of their birth and would have discovered to their joy and surprise they were indeed part of a vast and loving Multiverse. Their training was formidable and their perspective certainly as wide as their System of worlds allowed it to be. They had the advantage of the most up-to-date information on the subject of planetary enculturation, because what they were about to do had been done many times before, on countless planets, and was well

understood by those who watch over the destiny of worlds.

This little group was then transported, shrouded in the sleep that accompanies the journey through subspace, from the finer vibrational frequencies of the headquarter planet of this System to the denser level of material existence of a more recently developed world. It was in accompanying these hundred beings—the Prince's staff—that I first came to your world.

When we arrived the staff soon needed the material bodies that would function in a three-dimensional environment. They found that the surgeons from Avalon had been busy indeed. They'd telepathically called one hundred of the healthiest and best-formed members of the indigenous human races to a place they'd set up in the Persian Gulf region and asked them to offer a minute amount of their bioplasm—for a good cause, of course. The volunteers were also told that, as a result of their genetic gift, they, too, would be granted vastly extended life spans—that is, if they ate the same diet as their visitors.

From the bioplasm the surgeons were able to grow human-type bodies—fifty of each gender—that were soon to become the biological vehicles of the Prince's staff. Both the one hundred indigenous volunteers and intraterrestrials alike were then primed and encircuited to receive the incoming cosmic energies flowing, as we had been told, from the center of the galaxy. This energy source, however, has absolutely no effect unless activated by the chemical composition of the imported Shrub of Edentia, as it was called. This fact will become crucially important somewhat further down the line.

As you will have no doubt gathered by now, I was not among the hundred comprising the Prince's staff but a member of the corps of angels who were assigned to accompany them. This put me in the interesting position of often having to carry messages to and from the Prince, who did not have a material three-dimensional body created for him but remained in the fifth dimension, where he could maintain an overview of what was going on in the world. The staff 's sight had been adjusted so that they could perceive him, whereas the normal indigenous natives could not. That was the source of a lot of my work as a liaison officer, because even a high angel couldn't be everywhere at once.

So there they were—two hundred magnificent examples of a sort of superhumanity, with an additional corps of us angels accompanying them. The staff was immortal in the sense that, barring irremediable accidents, their bodies would continue to be in prime condition for as long as they were needed on the planet. Hoping that this was indeed so, they started building a center for themselves in the fertile area of the Persian Gulf peninsula, in a place now covered by the waters of the gulf.

That was my introduction to this odd little planet. None of us had any idea the course that had been designed and set so carefully for us was going to be profoundly thrown off-kilter, not once, but again and again, as we all tumbled down through the convoluted history of this troubled world. What we didn't know was the scale of the energies already at work on the planet and about which we had not been briefed. Looking back, now I wonder if the Melchizedek Brothers hadn't been aware of them either.

* * *

Mein Host entered the adult world younger and more innocently than many of his class and background, because he left school as a sixteen-year-old. Architecture had always attracted him, and fortunately the college requirements for architectural students didn't include the necessity of taking the advanced exams that would have kept him at Charterhouse for two more frightful years. He had no desire to turn out like the ones who had been beating him so harshly.

Frankly, the school was as happy to see him leave as he was to gain his freedom. In a final meeting, Jock Reith, his housemaster, told Diana in Mein Host's presence that the boy would never amount to anything and suggested she "find a place for him in a bank." The veiled insult was not lost on Mein Host. But he has since wondered if the old Scotsman wasn't wiser than he knew and may have deliberately said that because he knew how provoked the young rebel would be to try to prove him wrong.

At the time, though, both mother and son simply dismissed the comment as just one more derisive jibe. I wanted so much to whisper to Mein Host about how cruelly his nemesis had been talking about him behind his back, but I had no way of getting through. I could see how malicious gossip had tipped the balance in the housemaster's mind. Besides, he'd beaten Mein Host so

frequently himself that he was inclined to believe the worst about him. Perhaps it wouldn't have made any difference, because I could tell the poor man always had the feeling that he was being outwitted by the boy and, as a consequence, saw little reason not to be unpleasant.

Diana, although she hid it well, was more upset by this comment than her son, who'd grown used to being denigrated and misunderstood. She knew Mein Host as the person she could talk to about the business and her various personal problems. This started when the boy was about eight years old, on a long walk home through the back streets of Knightsbridge in London. Diana was fretting. She'd clearly thought for a moment back there that she was going to lose him. A plum stone had gone down the boy's throat the wrong way in a small restaurant where they'd stopped off for a a piece of pie to break the walk. Only the last-minute intervention of another customer had saved the day. He had grabbed both the boy's ankles, turned him upside down, and shaken him vigorously until the plum stone dropped out of him.

I'm sure it was that brush with mortality, as well as her own loneliness, that impelled Diana to talk openly and frankly about her plans, her problems, and her fears. She was a woman on her own in war-torn London, laboring long and hard to make ends meet; giving her child the best education she could . . . and there it was—all her hopes and expectations placed on the slim but willing shoulders of her much-loved only son.

Mein Host slipped easily into architecture without ever wondering (until somewhat later) whether he was simply living out his mother's dream for him. Diana had always been attracted to architects. She'd married one and could often be found typing up building specifications late into the night in the early days of having to make a living after the divorce. Enjoying her freedom as a single woman and preferring longer relationships, Diana took lovers who were mostly architects, including a brief fling with the French architect Le Corbusier, before she settled down to her longest subsequent relationship with Wells Coates, a delightfully eccentric and prominent avant-garde English/Canadian architect.

It just seemed natural for Mein Host to plunge into architecture. He quickly got a job at five pounds a week as the office boy at the studio of Basil Spense (later to become Sir Basil) and his partner Andrew Renton. After work the boy caught the bus down to Hammersmith School of Architecture for evening

classes while he applied to become a full-time student at one of the other two major schools of architecture in the city.

Brought under the wing of Andrew Renton because of the boy's budding talent for drawing—all those afternoons in Norman churchyards were finally paying off—the time passed rapidly and largely uneventfully for Mein Host. The work was hard and often menial, until Andrew Renton started using him to polish up the big perspective drawings used to sell a building's aesthetic to the client.

The joy of finally being out of that dreadful school, making his own decisions, and meeting people who were more like him started bringing out a new aspect of the boy's character. From being a shy and introverted child, he began to come out of himself. He made new friends and was soon tooling (to use an expression of the time) around London in a small MG sports car with a Canadian architectural student he met at Hammersmith. I watched him, his long hair flying in the wind, laughing with the pleasure and the freedom of it all.

Toward the end of the year and after hearing that he had been accepted into the Regent Street Polytechnic School of Architecture, he decided he'd better strike out on his own and see something of the larger world. To do this he needed to make some good money. Andrew Renton offered to talk to the builders of one of Basil Spense's current landmark towers, the Thorn Electrical building, and within a week Mein Host was up to his knees in mud at the bottom of a deep trench with a heavy jackhammer juddering away in his hands.

The building contractor started by having little sympathy for the idea of a privileged young man who wanted to play at being a workman and promptly gave him the hardest and most unpleasant jobs. However, Mein Host's good nature and his willingness to work hard soon earned him mascot status among the other considerably older and more hard-bitten laborers. Before long they were sharing lunch boxes together and happily watching and whistling at the young secretaries parading past on their lunch hours.

I don't want to miss my cue to tell you a little more about that pressing issue in all young men's lives—sex. This, of course, is fascinating to us angels, because we live what you might think of as sexless lives. But that is only because humans tend to think of sex in primarily physical or procreative

terms. Sexuality in our realms is neither physical nor procreative, yet in our relationships with our kin, the intimacy we share with each other can be far deeper than your limited sensuality will permit.

Before we get into sex, however, I do want to relate one incident that occurred after Mein Host had been working on the Thorn House building site for a couple of months, because it highlights an aspect of his personality that was emerging along with his newfound sense of freedom and well-being. This was a deep desire to face his inner demons.

He'd always had a fear of heights. Perhaps this is normal in some children, yet Mein Host would sweat in fear looking down from the top of a tall tree. There were times he would challenge his fear, but the results were always the same: more fear and an unsteady, nauseous trembling in his arms and legs.

One lunchtime on the building site, when the work had stopped, he slipped away from the other laborers and quietly made his way up the narrow ladder inside the central structure of one of the cranes the builders were using to pour concrete for the foundations and floor slabs. The crane soared twenty floors above street level with the jib swaying wildly in the wind. Determined to push himself to the limit, Mein Host hauled himself, sweating and panting, along the open metal latticework to the very tip of the jib and forced himself to sit there with his legs dangling hundreds of feet over St. Martin's Lane. I watched him doing this until he could finally look down without any nausea or uncontrollable trembling.

After he had returned, news of his exploit reached the management, and he was quickly taken off his teeth-rattling work with jackhammers and reassigned, with a raise, to the crane gang. Low on numbers—apparently fear of heights was equally prevalent among older building workers—they welcomed someone who could scurry up and down the scaffolding and metal ladders delivering tools, wages, and messages.

Thus he was able to accumulate the princely sum of £150 ($238), and one early August morning in 1957 he packed everything he needed into one small bag, said good-bye to his mother, and set out alone as so many have before him to explore the world. He boarded the train to the ferry across the English Channel, and in Paris he changed trains and headed for Scandinavia. Like many lads of his generation, Mein Host hoped that if he went to Sweden he would get laid.

This brings me back to that ever-fascinating subject of sex, which had begun to loom large in Mein Host's adolescent imagination. After those early tender times with his cousin, he hadn't shown much interest in any of the girls to whom his mother had tried to introduce him, colored surely by an incident that happened during the school holidays in his eleventh year.

Diana had been friends for some time with a wealthy couple who had a family of four children—three boys and the youngest, Judith, a plain girl of Mein Host's age. Mein Host was a few years younger than the youngest of the three boys and knew them slightly from previous visits he'd taken with his mother to their country home. He'd never got on particularly well with them, which isn't surprising, given the age spread of the boys, but when the family was in town they liked to make a point of taking Mein Host off his mother's hands for an afternoon. This particular afternoon it was to the movies.

In that way of parents trying to launch their young children into the cauldron of interpersonal relationships, Diana insisted on buying some African violets that she handed to her son as she dropped him off at the Marble Arch Odeon. She outlined the plan, to the horror of the boy, while she bought the flowers at a nearby shop. Mein Host was to present the violets to Judith as a way of thanking the family for inviting him to the film. So saying, Diana propelled her reluctant son through the revolving glass doors and walked off to work.

He still remembers with a shiver that agonizingly long walk across the thick red carpet; the hushed silence of an empty, but plush, cinema lobby; the blast of cool air over his reddening face; his arm outstretched, clutching the violets, as he plods stoically over to where the entire family is standing. There are those three smug older brothers, an irritated mother and father, and on a slightly higher step behind them, Judith—clearly looking as awkward as Mein Host.

When he finally reaches them, his attention fixed on getting rid of the flowers as quickly as possible, he reaches up to give them to Judith . . . and promptly trips on the step, falling down flat, with his face in the bunch of flowers. He can still hear the shouts of laughter of the boys—and who can really blame them?—and feel the dreadful sense of shame coming over him as he struggled to his feet, not knowing quite what to do with the battered

posy of violets. Poor little Judith made a halfhearted attempt to reach out and sympathize with him before yielding to her brothers' scorn.

It turned out that Diana delivered him to the cinema slightly more than her customary twenty minutes late and the family was getting steadily angrier and more impatient worrying whether the film would start without them. The humor of Mein Host's humiliation evidently lightened their moods. The English can be unconscionably cruel.

To this day, Mein Host has little idea what the film was, although, of course, I know it was *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. Michael Rennie was the dignified and predictably misunderstood extraterrestrial with Gort, his enormous, destructive robot. Given Mein Host's future interest in all matters extraterrestrial, this can only be appreciated as a divine joke.

During the boy's early teens, there were naturally some torrid little gropings with all the passion of unconsummated adolescent lust. In his fourteenth year a young Swedish girl caught his fancy. She was some two years his senior and a foreign language exchange student staying with his cousins in Folkestone.

Agneta was certainly the most beautiful girl he'd ever seen, with her tall, willowy figure, perfect legs, and blond hair. She, glad for the opportunity to speak English, was happy to encourage the boy in his fantasies on the long walks they took together over the chalk downs behind Folkestone. Although this interlude only lasted a few weeks before Agneta had to return home to Sweden, she enjoyed him enough to come back again next year when they were able to spend more time together.

The relationship, if it can be called that, remained resolutely chaste, with Mein Host content to have gained the attention of a beautiful girl older than he was. She was a kind young woman.

Now, with money in his pocket, the sea churning beneath him as he crossed the channel in the ferry, he was out in the world and he desperately wanted to consummate his desire. The English girls of his background were grimly holding on to their virginity, as they'd been taught before the invention of birth-control pills and the sexual revolution of the 1960s turned all that around. At some point the popular rumor of the time, "that Swedish girls are easier," reached Mein Host's ears and, remembering the exquisite Agneta (yet quite forgetting how chaste was their time together), he got it into

his head to go to Sweden and find out for himself. Although he wasn't holding out high hopes for Agneta in this light, he evidently thought it would be a good place to start, and who knows what might happen once he was there.

The last straw, the thing that finally made him decide to travel to Sweden, occurred a couple of months earlier with Sarah, the darkly beautiful, sloe-eyed only daughter of a self-made multimillionaire. She came complete with a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce in which the young couple would accompany Sarah's mother and father down to their country house.

The evening in question, however, was when the two young people finally decided to "do" it together. That afternoon Mein Host spent loitering around a pharmacy in Soho, mustering up enough courage to go in and ask for a packet of condoms, or French letters, as they were called in those days. When he finally did get up his nerve, the pharmacist behind the counter insisted on rolling his eyes and making snide comments, terribly embarrassing the eager young man. It did not augur well for the evening ahead.

At the apartment, his mother is out for the evening and the passionate young Sarah is on her back in his bed. She has awkwardly hoisted up her crinoline skirts around her waist and her panties are down, as Mein Host struggles to fit the condom over his rapidly expanding member. After a lot of wincing, he gets it on and starts feeling around among all the petticoats and stocking tops and garter belt for where to put himself. This turns out to be more complicated than the innocent fumblings he remembers with his cousin.

Then suddenly, both freeze. They hear a key in the front door. It's Diana, home early from another distressing evening with her somewhat autocratic lover of the time. Mein Host jumps to his feet, pulling on pants and trousers, noticing while he is doing this that the condom is nowhere to be found and that his manly member, once so gloriously expanded, is now shriveled to a frizzled and sad-looking little worm.

"Everything all right?" they hear Diana call as she comes down the corridor while the two are desperately trying to straighten things up, the crinoline party skirt flouncing up and down with the effort. The door cracks open on the guilty pair. "Fine. Everything's fine," they both stammer as the door closes quickly again.

Even young passion wasn't able to be reignited after that nasty shock!

There wasn’t much that could be said or done but to put Sarah in a cab and crawl back into bed—another failed attempt. But worse was yet to happen.

When he tried to call her the next day, he was put off coldly by one of the servants in her luxurious home. Then silence. I saw him worrying. Whatever might have happened? Three days later Sarah was finally able to get away to make a call. Crying, she told him hurriedly that when she went home and ran to greet and hug her father, a rather forlorn-looking condom dropped out of all that crinoline onto the floor between them. And (amid a crescendo of tears) she was never to see Mein Host again.

Of course, they did manage to sneak in a few quick meetings, but the passion was evidently dissipated by the events of that evening.

After quick and inconsequential stopovers in Paris and then Copenhagen, Mein Host boarded the boat and then the train to Stockholm to find himself sitting next to yet another attractive young Swedish girl—dark-haired this time—who also turned out to be named Agneta.

They chatted amicably until it was dark outside and one of the other passengers in the carriage turned the lights down low. He could smell the heat of her perfume in the stuffy air of the warm compartment. If only he could doze and dream, but his hormones appeared to be keeping him all too wide awake. Finally, he must have decided on a ploy. Having just read *Le Rouge et Noir,* Stendahl’s classic primer for the young romantic, he decided to lift and adapt that splendid scene in which the narrator dares himself to summon the courage to finally hold his beloved’s hand. Unaware that this was a time-honored strategy, Mein Host decided cunningly that he’d allow his head to fall gently on her shoulder. Then, before she reacted, he’d lift it off again as if he’d started in his sleep. After doing this three or four times he realized she wasn’t pulling away, and by the time they got to Malmo they were happily snuggled in each other’s arms.

He parted from her at Stockholm station but with an invitation to visit this other, perhaps more compliant, Agneta in Harnosand, on the northeast coast of Sweden, almost as far north as the Arctic Circle.

Dropping his bag at the YMCA and after a long walk around the center of this elegant city—a city that hadn’t seen the ravages of war—he called the first Agneta and found himself invited to dinner that very evening. Could he

come at seven o’clock?

Diligently concerned about being courteous but having no idea of the local customs, Mein Host arrived at Agneta’s front door a polite twenty minutes after the appointed hour, following the social rules of London, only to find an irate mother—at six-foot-plus tall—towering over her cowed daughter. Lateness, it was made very clear, was considered the height of rudeness in Sweden.

It was not a pleasant meal, and it quickly became evident that whatever preconceived fantasy Mein Host might have been entertaining in his mind was not to be. He left soon after dessert, the mother and now the daughter, too, still scowling.

After a few days of wandering the city he took the train up to Harnosand to be greeted enthusiastically by the second Agneta and her university teacher parents. Here he found a peace and yet an intensity of interest he’d never experienced back in England in the various homes in which he’d lived or stayed. People were actually interested in him as a person, albeit one from another culture. Both parents were intelligent, sensitive people who spoke English perfectly, as did their daughter.

As the days passed, laced with long walks in the forests, Mein Host’s libidinous intentions subsided in the pure pleasure of living within the bosom of a family that truly loved one another. He also had no doubt that the parents would welcome any form of union their daughter might choose to form with him—they made that clear to him in so many words.

Yet, as the two young people talked and walked, sometimes lying together in small sun-drenched meadows ringed with the darkness of the forest, opening up to each other with an honesty that surprised both of them, Mein Host was able to see something of the foolishness of his sexual expectations and manipulations. He recognized that the pressure driving him to make love with a woman was becoming a contest he was having with himself. He confessed to her in a moment of real insight how objectified women were becoming for him, almost like sex objects, blinding him to the qualities of an individual woman. Agneta’s kindness and her complete lack of judgment allowed him to see what he’d never previously thought possible—that a woman could be a wonderful friend.

It was scarcely surprising then, a week after arriving back in London from

his loving but platonic relationship with Agneta in Harnosand, that he should meet and be quickly—and by all appearances, willingly—seduced by a more experienced girl, the younger sister of the girlfriend of one of his close friends.

When it finally occurred, it all happened quite naturally and without any effort on Mein Host’s part.

4

A Kundalini Initiation

The Spirit of India, a Snake Charmer's Music, Cybernetics, Entheogenic Research, and Encountering the Divine

Life as an architectural student opened Mein Host's eyes to the surprising fact—at least to him—that there were other people out there who were similar to him; that is, who had somewhat the same interests and aspirations.

England was still struggling to rebuild her cities after the war. Memories of the Bauhaus, as well as Frank Lloyd Wright's massive works of egotism, and the utilitarian architecture of an impoverished nation required a complete repudiation of earlier styles and solutions from the students.

One consequence of this rejection of the past was that Mein Host—together with a group of architecture students—formed what they called the Anti-Ugly Movement and marched with placards outside the very worst of the recently designed buildings. Having shown no interest in marching with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, it was a significant insight into his character that while he wasn't willing to march for his survival, he was sufficiently moved to protest against ugliness.

Architecture in Britain in the 1950s was at its lowest ebb and showed no signs of picking up in the near future. For Mein Host, it was a depressing prospect.

It was time for something entirely new.

With all the intensity of the traumatized, Mein Host had recently started seeking answers to his questions in more subtle and darker areas. When a small advertisement appeared in a local paper asking for volunteers (at £15 a session—a small fortune in those days!) to act as guinea pigs for a psychological institute, he jumped at the opportunity of making some extra money. All he had to do was tell the truth to the student shrinks—and he had plenty to tell.

Gradually, as he was questioned two or three times a week, sometimes by groups of twenty budding psychologists, but more often as a quasi-patient to a qualifying therapist, he started to gain some perspective on his life so far. He came to see more clearly how authority—or, what passed for authority—had always been against him. They'd tried to break his spirit, to seize his soul for their own ends, as they'd tried to impose their way of thinking on him. Through the depth of the psychologists' questioning, he was able to see that his knee-jerk reaction was either to ignore authority and get on with his life, or to actively attempt to outwit those trying to dominate him.

He had been beaten enough at Charterhouse to understand that he wasn't invulnerable. By this time he knew he was a loner by nature, and he was becoming more confident in the quickness of his wits and his sense of adventure. These characteristics only became sharpened during his time at school. The questioning by the psychologists, and Mein Host's decision to be as honest as possible in his answers, allowed him to dig deeper into the depths of his psyche.

As none of the institute's therapists had any interest in actually "curing" him, happy merely to pass their tests, he was able to see and understand—for the first time—some of the deeper currents running through his life up to that point. He began to appreciate that he was a natural rebel, and the abuse he'd suffered at the hands of the authorities, whether it was Hitler's doodlebugs or bullying schoolboys, only served to strengthen that natural inclination. In the course of this quasi-psychotherapy, he started to see the harm this was having on him. I believe these weekly sessions, while not in themselves very revealing, nonetheless started a new, more introspective period in Mein Host's life.

Still very much an atheist, he rejected all the authorities of humankind as being fundamentally corrupted by their own power and, like Moloch, constantly demanding more souls to consume. With the arrogance of the young, he made the natural step of assuming everything said and expected of him by those in (arbitrary) authority would be tainted by corruption and self-interest. What they claimed as good was, in his opinion, of necessity bad—and vice versa. Almost everything seemed to him exactly the opposite of how it was intended to be. He wasn't the first person to realize the world had almost everything upside down.

This seeming perversity was reinforced at architectural college by the contrasting views of the older, senior tutors with the younger lecturers, who were often only ten years older than the students themselves. These opposing factions frequently had almost uncontrollable arguments in front of the seventy or so students, sometimes even ending in physical violence. So, once more, he was thrown back into confronting that the only authority he could wholeheartedly accept was his own.

In response to that realization he set out to explore some of the extremes of architecture. Mein Host was in the forefront of the brief flowering of Bowelism, a style of architecture permitted by the spraying of concrete over chicken-wire forms, which could look like the intestines of an enormous animal. Many of the senior tutors were incensed at what they claimed was an insult to their refined sense of aesthetics. In a city planning course his design for a town in which the buildings disappeared into the sky had provoked the older lecturers to think he was poking fun at them. However, one of the younger tutors took note of Mein Host's whimsical imagination. He supported the young student's ingenuity in designing those buildings with mirrored facades, slanted at differing angles to constantly reflect the sky, so as to become virtually invisible to those in the streets below.

Computers were just starting to reveal their potential so he was soon researching cybernetics—then a science still in its infancy—and by his fifth year at college he was picking the brains of scientists like Gordon Pask, examining optics, the biology of the eye, and what was known about the physiology of hallucination. He studied quantum physics, recent advances in audiovisual technology, electronics, and computers to research and prepare for his design for a total immersion theater, created to produce collective lucid dreams in its patrons and which he playfully called Hallucorama.

Because the project had been so thoroughly researched and the ideas behind it were so unusual, it was bound to cause even further polarization among the staff. With one notable exception all the senior tutors rejected in the very harshest terms the whole concept as being impossible. Yet, as would happen at other key points in Mein Host's later life, someone came forward with such heartfelt enthusiasm and deep appreciation for the young man's work that the official opprobrium fell off his shoulders without shattering his confidence.

This time it was the same lecturer, a young German architect I'll call Karl, the one who'd supported his Invisible City. The man could see how much original thinking had gone into the project. Alone among the staff, Karl generously took Mein Host under his wing (I think angels can use that cliché with impunity) and encouraged him to continue with his design for his final-year thesis—that of a film school in London.

The originality of these projects was stimulated in part by another significant arrival into Mein Host's life—mind-altering drugs or, the preferred word, entheogens, R. Gordon Wasson's appropriate name for power plants that can draw out the divine essence in those who consume them. This name contrasts entheogens with pharmaceutical drugs like the uppers and downers, and all the opiates, in which he never had any interest. He was starting to think of himself as an explorer of consciousness. He wasn't drawn to downers or to any substance that would deaden his perceptions. He was already awake enough to know he needed to become more so. It was Mein Host's weekly sessions at the institute that stimulated his newfound introspection, yet it was entheogens that took him to the next step in personal growth.

The intensity of this interest in altered states of consciousness started quite by chance, in Zahedan, a small border town on the southern border of Iran.

Together with two of his friends, Richard, a fellow architectural student, and Canadian photographer Robin Spry, Mein Host decided to travel overland to India and back in one of the three-month summer vacations students were awarded in those less-rushed days. Their adventures, as might be imagined, brought them into contact with people living different lives with very different priorities.

There were long days and nights shivering in an unheated coach on the Orient Express from Paris to Istanbul, the depressing landscape of Bulgaria broken only by the discovery in Turkey of a dead man—presumed to be an escaping Bulgarian—found frozen to death and jammed in the space between the wheels and the undercarriage. It was a harsh introduction to the repressive cruelties of the communist world.

To appreciate the unfortunate irony of the next misadventure, it's necessary to go back briefly to a boy of fifteen and a half, earning a little

extra money by packing up Christmas parcels in the warehouse of Harrods, the smart department store in London's Knightsbridge. Mein Host was by far the youngest one there, and it was the first time he'd found himself surrounded by an older, more rough-and-ready crowd than he was used to at school.

On the day before Christmas, with all the parcels packed and sent, the workers held a party in which, to much amusement, the boy was persuaded to drink a few glasses of Scotch. As a result, he became horribly ill, humiliated in front of his coworkers, and steered clear of alcohol in excess for the rest of his life—with one inadvertent exception: the long train journey from Istanbul to Ezerum, on the southern border of Turkey.

Arriving at the station in Istanbul, the three adventurers saw that their train —the only one for the next twenty-four hours—was leaving in five minutes. Stumbling through their schoolboy French, they snatched their tickets and started the mad rush for the train. At the last moment, realizing they had no water between them, Mein Host doubled back to a stand piled high with liter bottles of water. Quickly buying three of them, he dashed back to where the train was already starting to move out of the station. He was pulled aboard by his friends, and they settled into their seats to watch the Turkish countryside unfold.

Soon, it was Richard who reached for a swig of water and found to their shared astonishment that the water was, in fact, vodka. The Turkish for vodka, printed large on the bottles, was confusingly similar to the word *water*. And they had three big bottles of it!

It was not a wholly unhappy journey for Mein Host. Kindly offering his seat to a massively overweight Turkish woman, he found a spot for himself in the constantly shifting, rattling space between the carriages of the overcrowded train. This unsteady perch he shared with an enormous Kurd, replete with a long, curved sword, which he brandished at the slightest provocation or imagined insult. As the vodka bottle, and then bottles, moved backward and forward between them, Mein Host and this brother of the desert fell into an almost telepathic rapport, in spite of the language barrier. Different ages and backgrounds meant nothing—it was as though they'd always known each other. It opened Mein Host's eyes to the reality that kindred spirits, in all guises, exist in every culture.

Rob and Richard, not overly delighted at being without water for the two-day trip, were happy to leave Mein Host alone with the fierce warrior, who by now was singing his own wild songs on the shoulder of the young Englishman.

Parting with many tears and the old Kurd's blessings at Ezerum, our three adventurers made their wobbly way to the bus station to get to Tabriz on the other side of the Turkish and Iranian border. They soon found themselves on a bus full of Iranian students returning from the great universities of Europe and America, some with as many as three doctorates. As they explained in their impeccable English, the Shah was putting a lot of money into education, in part to justify to his subjects the enormous funding he was receiving from America but also to keep all these superbright young intellectuals as far away as possible from the center of power in Teheran.

In the early 1960s, the Shah was already trying desperately to hold on to his power by terrifying people with his secret police, SAVAK. As is now more widely known, SAVAK operatives were trained by American CIA agents in all the ghastly ways that would become standard operating procedure in South America a decade later.

The long trip to Teheran became a crash course in geopolitics. The Iranian students knew they were returning to a country where there were no jobs for them; in cities, prospective employers both despised and envied them their education, yet refused to employ them. They'd seen the contrast between the way Iran was being kept poor and dependent, far from the freedoms and prosperity available in most countries in the Western world. Many of them referred to the CIA-backed coup that brought the Shah back into power as occurring simply because Iran wanted to nationalize and own their oil.

It was obvious to the three of them that revolution was in the air. The feeling was palpable and explosive, and it was hard to believe that the emotions wouldn't boil over into violence when they reached the capital.

Arriving in Teheran, and required to report their presence in the city as instructed at the border, the three spent a couple of days wandering the city looking for the office of the Secret Police. No one they asked knew where it was located, some of them explaining with exasperated impatience in universal sign language that no one knew where it was . . . because it was secret.

This was not something Mein Host could have articulated at the time, but a gentle psychic pressure was put on him and the others to get out of the capital as fast as possible.

Teheran was not a welcoming city.

* * *

All this talk of resisting and defying arbitrary authority is extremely interesting to us angels. Most celestials will go through their entire existence without ever being "tempted into rebellion," as MA likes to call it. The authority of the Most Highs and the guiding hands of the Mother Spirit appear to be absolute and immutable.

Yet Lucifer, the Descending Son in charge of this System of inhabited planets, did challenge the status quo. He questioned the deepest authority in the Multiverse, demanding greater freedom for those he governed and was said to have even called into question the reality of the Supreme Creator. It was this last claim that so perturbed MA, since Lucifer was accusing his immediate spiritual forebears of using the invisibility of the Creator as a fraudulent program designed to keep all sentient life in a state of subservience.

Many tens of thousands of years later, we're encouraged to understand the underlying causes and meanings of this uprising among the angels. I believe the Melchizedek Brothers are now maintaining that it was because of his rejection of the reality of the Invisible Father that Lucifer was incapable of truly understanding the deeper themes behind the uprising. Unaware that we were all actors in a cosmic drama, Lucifer forged ahead, convinced of the righteousness of his cause and, in my opinion, seemed to go far out of his way to invite MA's wrath and rejection.

As a Watcher, I've come to believe that the most instructive lens through which to view the Lucifer rebellion is to understand it as a great experiment. Lucifer couldn't have known or understood this at the time, of course, as he later accused the Melchizedek teachers in the great universities of the Local Universe of releasing only the most superficial information on the previous two rebellions in the angelic realms. I suspect that having access to the results of the previous rebellions might well have discouraged Lucifer from his plans.

Consequently, he was surprised and horrified when the thirty-seven planets whose angelic administrations followed his lead were promptly isolated, cut off, and deprived of certain incoming cosmic rays, carrying information necessary for the ordered development of intelligent life. There were other problems, too, but these weren't to show themselves until somewhat later.

I believe this cosmic isolation was the last thing Lucifer expected, and yet it also presented him with a horrifying challenge. In many ways he got what he wanted—an opportunity to put his own theories into practice. Yet he was going to have to do it without the support of MA and the angelic realms upon which any System Sovereign could rely under normal conditions.

Lucifer and Satan were on their own now, alone with those they had swayed to their point of view—in fact, a relatively small number of angels considering the vast numbers serving in Lucifer's former domain. It was a time full of excitement and adventure, tinged perhaps with a barely repressed doubt that we might have all made a terrible mistake.

Not until many millennia later did some of the deeper implications of Lucifer's courageous stand start to become apparent to some of those concerned—including myself. But, at the time, I, too, was carried away with the excitement of all the new possibilities and new freedoms.

* * *

There was no way of getting directly to Zahedan. Yet feeling the need to get out of Teheran as quickly as possible, the three companions decided to take the bus to the holy city of Mashad and then transfer onto another bus that would take them down the Iran-Afghanistan border to Zahedan.

Arriving in the late evening at Mashad, they walked around the ancient, sacred city, taking in the smells and enjoying the sights to which they were unaccustomed. This was the real Iran; superb mosques nestled among the most elegant adobe houses, not the synthetic copying of Western ways they saw in Teheran.

Having to leave at midnight cut short their ramblings as they heaved their knapsacks up onto the roof and scrambled onto the ancient bus. Finding seats at the back of the bus—they wondered why all the other seats were taken except for those in the rear—they soon found themselves in an almost impossible situation. All of them were well over six feet tall, with Robin the

tallest at six-foot-four. The amount of knee room allocated must have been designed—if it was ever designed by anything other than greed—for far shorter people. And this was to be a two-and-a-half-day trip.

As they lurched out of the small town the road soon turned in to a dirt track that cut through the desert, interrupted only by dry water courses, along which the bus would have to jolt and heave. With the absence of working shock absorbers, it quickly became apparent to our three travelers just why the back seats were shunned by the locals.

This was to be completely unlike the bus ride from Tabriz to Teheran, filled with bright, talkative students with radical ideas and revolution in their hearts. Here, by contrast, were men and women of a far more primitive Iran. Peasant women mostly, with their chickens next to them bound and sullen, on their way to market, their rials clutched in hands that disappeared into the darkness of their burkas. Within the first few hours of severe jolting, one of the large sacks of yogurt lying on the floor of the bus burst open, sending its contents sloshing up and down the aisle and onto the side platforms. None of the locals seemed in the slightest bit concerned by this, greeting it with the same fatalism as when the bus was forced to wend its way around the twisted heaps of wrecked buses and cars littering the trail.

Their happiest moments were spent in the various caravanserai at which the bus stopped every six hours or so. These simple, yet beautifully elegant buildings were barrel-vaulted structures of mud brick with raised seating platforms on either side of a broad aisle and were cool and comforting after the hot hell of the bus. Persian rugs covered the seating platforms and hung from the walls in even the most humble watering hole. The natural sense of good design was everywhere.

Earlier, back in one of the villages they passed through, Mein Host paused in a bazaar to admire a small shop devoted solely to selling cog wheels of every diameter and use. These wheels had been skillfully arranged on the three walls in such a clever way that every cog wheel, whatever its size, fitted into the ones next to it. They all agreed, after Mein Host called them over, that it was a masterpiece of form and function.

Then they were back on the rickety bus again, now stinking with rancid yogurt, chicken excrement, and unwashed humanity. There was no chance to read, and it was almost impossible to talk amid all the noisy vibrations on the

bus. They desperately held on to the back of the seat in front of them, waiting for the next jolt, and trying to remember to duck their heads to avoid smashing them against the ceiling.

Finally reaching Zahedan, the three decided to stay still for a few days, as they'd been traveling constantly since Paris.

The next evening Mein Host, off on his own on a long walk through the backwaters of this little town on the edge of nowhere, came across a small group of wizened old Iranians squatting around a large water pipe. Kindly gesturing to the young Englishman to join them, they took out what looked to him like a black, chocolatey substance and crumbled it onto the burning coals in the cup at the top of the pipe. Soon they were passing the mouthpiece to Mein Host and laughing in great hoots as he inhaled clouds of scented smoke and coughed uncontrollably.

Then, to his utter astonishment, Mein Host was up and out of his body and soaring over the small run-down town in an ecstasy of freedom he'd never experienced before. Some hours later, as dawn was flooding the barren mountains in pink and gold, he bought a number of black squares of the excellent local hashish. He couldn't have known it at the time, but he'd inadvertently stumbled onto a tool for exploring altered states of consciousness that was to color his entire life.

As often seems to happen, people have early glimpses into the deeper aspects of life—a singular experience—that they're able to blot out from their awareness until some other event stimulates the memory at a later, and possibly more relevant, time. This is just what Mein Host did. He put the blocks of hashish in the bottom of his knapsack and promptly forgot all about them. After a couple of months crossing umpteen borders he arrived back in London, unpacked his bag, and there at the bottom, to his happy surprise, were the little blocks of black hashish.

Mein Host's adventures in India with his two friends, when they finally got there, were intense and wonderfully strange as they moved around the immense subcontinent by Indian railways. Choosing to travel third class for the experience, they thought themselves fortunate if they could sleep in a luggage rack or squeeze relatively undisturbed under the seats. At least they didn't need to ride on top of the carriage, as so many of their fellow travelers

were forced to do.

The journey from Delhi to Madras, on the southeast coast of India, scheduled to take three days, ended up taking two more days than planned. Five days on an Indian train would have taxed anyone's good nature. The simmering disagreements, bound to occur whenever strong-willed young males are thrown together, came out in a series of amiable arguments that invariably ended in laughter. Rob's adamant insistence on viewing "and experiencing" life through the viewfinder of his camera was becoming annoying to the other two.

"Rob, you're missing what's really happening," Richard would say, a little more sharply than he might have intended. "You're only aware of what's going on in that silly little rectangle. Go on. Throw the thing away! Besides, it's slowing us down."

To which Rob might reply, "You guys like to stop and draw. You can't complain about my holding you up."

So it went, before the reality of being stuck on a train—an Indian train—reasserted itself and they'd dissolve in helpless laughter.

The conditions in the third-class carriage were worse than anything they'd yet encountered. The corridors were packed tight with people not lucky enough to get a seat but who considered themselves more fortunate than those riding on the roof. The toilets were in a condition no angel would want to describe and were only made worse by the additional two days of traveling. Dysentery was always one mouthful of locally bottled Fanta away, and the third-class carriage of an Indian train was no place to suffer that particular ailment, as Mein Host discovered to his profound discomfort on the long ride from Lahore, in Pakistan, to Delhi.

Finally arriving in Madras, unwashed and exhausted, the trio succumbed to the ancient magic of India. Superb temples soared from the thick jungle. Tier upon tier of ornate sculptures—men, women, and gods, frozen in spiritual and sexual postures, reaching into the sky and quite unlike anything they'd seen in the north—all this beckoned them on toward the sea. Here they were greeted by the welcoming sight of long, golden beaches lined with palm trees and the massive breakers of the Indian Ocean crashing onto the sand. Yet, for all that, there wasn't a soul on the beach.

It was soon to become obvious to the lads why the normal Indian family might have some very good reasons to avoid the water. After walking a couple of miles, they settled down on the soft sand to rest. Just before dusk they spotted a number of outrigger canoes on the horizon. Carried in by an evening swell, soon the canoes were surfing in on the huge waves, five or six men to a canoe, balanced skillfully on the crest of a churning behemoth before scrambling out in the shallow water and unloading their haul of fish. It was while the lads were watching this masterful performance it dawned on them why the beaches were deserted: there wasn't a fisherman who hadn't lost an arm, or a hand, or a leg to sharks.

Another day they were introduced to one of the many local holy men who left them with the promise to teleport from Madras to Delhi, to meet them in a café in the capital where the three agreed to be at an appointed time. Sadly for them, the guru did not turn up as promised, although they waited a few extra hours just in case he misjudged his timing. So much for the "Mysterious Wisdom of the East" they agreed, their innate skepticism surfacing again following their expectation, and then their disappointment, at the Indian's failure to appear. Mein Host said later that he hadn't really held out any hope the old guy would appear. What he didn't tell the others was how unexpectedly disappointed he was when he didn't—but this was quickly suppressed.

On the surface, Mein Host had developed by this time into a sharply skeptical young man. When he rejected religion in his teens, he replaced it only with an angry cynicism, which extended to going out of his way to scorn anything vaguely religious or mystical. Ever curious, he'd read widely in the areas of mysticism and parapsychology, and yet he still felt everything could be explained without resorting to the paranormal. This skepticism was affirmed to his amusement one day in New Delhi as he was off on a walk alone.

Turning a corner, he found himself in a large open space, which must have been the forecourt to a dilapidated palatial structure bordering one side of the dusty plaza. A small crowd was gathering excitedly around a turbaned man who, with his child assistant, was preparing to do the Indian rope trick.

Mein Host, wanting to see better, avoided the crowd and found a stone staircase on the side of the palace leading to a long colonnade about forty feet

off the ground and overlooking the courtyard below. The corridor, the full length of the building, was shrouded by an ornate stone brise-soleil—an elaborately carved screen designed to keep out the sun.

Peering through stonework, he was in time to see the turbaned man haranguing the crowd, although he couldn't understand what the man was saying. Then, on cue, he ordered his assistant, a skinny little boy of no more than eight or ten in a loincloth, to climb to the top of the rope that he was fondling, as he gave his spiel, and was now flinging straight up in the air.

In doubtless the most artful feature of his performance, the rope stood rigid and firm, the top about fifteen feet above the ground. At another quick signal, the boy shimmied up the rope . . . and disappeared. At least, that is how it must have appeared to the gathered crowd who roared and gaped with astonishment.

However, from his vantage point high above them and peering through the brise-soleil, Mein Host was able to see the boy, his hands and feet clutching the rope, keeping very still and quiet, well above the heads of the crowd**.** After a few minutes, with the people dispersed to seek new distractions after leaving a few crumpled rupee notes in a basket, the child slipped down the rope to rejoin the fakir.

This was Mein Host's first experience of collective hypnosis and the power of suggestion. It was a lesson he would have been wise to learn.

Music always played an active part in Mein Host's life, as it did for everyone coming of age in the 1960s. In a culture as tightly repressed as England's in the 1950s, it's scarcely surprising that rock and roll emerged as an antidote.

Diana was an accomplished classical guitarist, and Mein Host started playing one of her instruments by the time he was twelve years old. Much to her disappointment, he never showed any interest in classical music. I knew he associated it negatively with his angry and unpredictable uncle Norman, who liked to play his prized classical records. I once overheard the lad telling his friends how stiff and formal all those concertos and symphonies were; how the music imposed itself on the listener, how it was "dominion over" music—it wasn't free and wild, as music should be. Now where did that come from?

At the same time, popular music of that period—with its sentimental

crooners, novelty songs, and big bands—was crafted to appeal to his parents' generation and was just as unappealing to the young rebel. All this changed early one evening at Charterhouse in his sixteenth year, when Elvis Presley's "Heartbreak Hotel" came on the radio for the first time, breaking through the sonic smog and drawing the boys in the common room close to the radio, now at full volume.

His mother's unexpected love for Southern blues, as well as her records like "Minnie the Moocher's Wedding Day," songs by the Andrews Sisters, the vocal wonders of the Mills Brothers, and folk songs rendered by the avuncular Burl Ives, encouraged Mein Host to keep practicing. Getting together with three friends at school, he started his first band, playing that peculiar brand of English music called "Skiffle," loosely based on American country music. But it was the explosion of rock and roll into his life that opened up whole new vistas of music for him. A few months after first hearing Elvis Presley, he gathered half a dozen enthusiasts and together they sneaked out of bounds to see the film *The Girl Can't Help It*. To listen to Little Richard, Fats Domino, Eddie Cochran, and the Platters up there on the silver screen; to fall madly in adolescent love with the exquisite Julie London; to drool over the soon-to-be-decapitated Jayne Mansfield—all made the punishment waiting for them on their return thoroughly worthwhile.

So the Skiffle group led him to a rock and roll band. Inspired by guitarists like Wes Montgomery and Django Reinhardt, Mein Host, in turn, explored the more challenging forms of jazz.

Yet, of all these various styles of music, nothing could have prepared Mein Host for the visceral impact of those plaintive notes he first heard echoing over the mud and wattle huts of one of the poorest sections of Delhi. It was so achingly familiar to him—utterly joyous and deeply sad simultaneously—a single piping sound that could plunge into the depths of despair and then soar throbbingly to the heights of resolution and tenderness.

Following the sounds through the narrow streets, he finally turned a corner to find an old man wrapped in white and playing a simple gourdlike flute to a large wicker basket. As Mein Host watched, the lid on the basket started to move, only to fall off as the hooded head of a large cobra emerged, swaying elegantly to the cadence of the music. Soon, the snake was half out of the basket and gently undulating to the exquisite sounds. Mein Host squatted on

his haunches, as transfixed as the cobra. He clearly knew this music in a very deep way. Although he could never have formed the thought at the age of twenty, he dimly recognized that the sound carried a resonance familiar to his soul.

What struck him apart from the music was that this performance wasn't done for an audience. There was no one there listening and the piping started well before he found the snake charmer. No, this was being done for the pure joy and beauty of it, and no doubt a chance for the charmer to be with his beloved snake for a quiet moment.

What became obvious to Mein Host was the depth of the bond possible between man and snake. They clearly loved each other. This was an experience Mein Host was to have a few years later when he came to care for a small female boa constrictor—until she fell from one of her perches and died. Once again he was able to directly experience the degree of love possible between these two very different species. The fact that snakes tend to inspire fear in so many people merely proved to him once more how foolish and wrongheaded the world was.

As can be imagined, the lessons derived from traveling in such exotic and seemingly alien cultures encouraged the three young men to reexamine their own backgrounds and their lives at home. Many of the strictures placed on them by their education—they were boarding school boys and scions of decent homes—and the expectations of parents and peers all seemed completely irrelevant when seen through the eyes of another culture. All the striving and meaningless self-denial, the power moves, the corruption and lies, the desire to control and manipulate others, the growing materialism of life back in London—all seemed to reflect poorly in light of the raw simplicity they found in their travels through India and the Middle East.

The ever-present poverty appalled them, of course, but the innate and almost palpable sense of spirituality permeating India was working its way into their souls—especially in both Richard and Mein Host's case. Although, on the outside, Mein Host was still tough and skeptical of anything he couldn't perceive with his senses, it was obvious to me that he was setting himself up for something extraordinary.

If it appears to the reader that angels must live rather constrained, even boring, lives, with nothing much happening in our realm that isn't part of the

Divine Flow, then you should realize that our main interest comes from observing the unforeseeable antics humans get involved in. And, yes, every once in a while we do try to get involved. This is invariably frustrating, and our attempts to redirect our ward's interests are almost always unsuccessful.

This held especially true when I watched my ward's struggle to deny the very feelings that, if pursued with an open heart and mind, would have demonstrated the existence of transcendent realities. Daily we observe superb pieces of angelic coordination being dismissed as coincidences, or, perhaps, they get called *synchronicities* if the person is more aware of the deeper currents of life.

Yet, for all his resistance, Mein Host's trip overland to India precipitated the start of a spiritual crisis that was to last the following two years.

When Mein Host returned and found the blocks of hashish at the bottom of his knapsack, he started exploring the altered state that hash produces in the quietness of his own home. He quickly found that the visionary aspects of the substance were unusually helpful in the creative design process. The problems he faced in the projects on which he worked in his third and fourth year at architectural college would often resolve into new, hitherto-unthought-of solutions under the influence of the hashish. He felt as if a door was opening in his head and a new light were streaming through.

As these realizations deepened and took root in his consciousness, he started to see, with a clarity of insight gained from his travels in other cultures, just why psychoactive substances were viewed with such fear and alarm by most of the official bodies of the Western world. They certainly did start opening his eyes to what might be going on beneath the surface of what would later be called consensus reality.

Finding hashish such a useful and inspiring tool in the creative process, he decided to explore other psychoactive substances. On hearing that by taking up to ten over-the-counter ergotamine pills—one of which was intended to relieve a migraine—you would undergo a full-blown psychedelic experience, he and his new girlfriend, Jean, set out on a journey of exploration. This was something very different from hashish, and for the first time they both encountered some of the weird, wonderful, and sometimes utterly terrifying spaces that entheogens can open up in the human psyche.

Although these trips were intensely revealing, Mein Host resolutely held on to his atheistic belief system in the face of considerable transcendent challenges.

His was a very hard head to break open.

With their burgeoning interest in entheogens, Jean—by that time at the top of her modeling career—returned from a job in New York with a handful of white sugar cubes soaked in lysergic acid and wrapped carefully in foil. A single cube with 500 micrograms of pure Sandoz LSD-25, slowly dissolved in the mouth, allowed them to probe even more deeply the transcendent realms that ergotamine had opened up for them, without the concern that excessive doses of migraine pills could cause gangrene.

This was well before entheogens became prohibited in the late 1960s. A number of serious artists, writers, and psychiatrists—inspired by Aldous Huxley's long essay, *The Doors of Perception*, and two years later, in 1956, *Heaven and Hell*—were investigating the extraordinary potential of entheogens for healing, creativity, and for opening the door to other levels of consciousness.

Telepathy, for example, became real for them late one evening in London when the young couple unwisely ventured out into the streets believing they'd come down from the LSD. Turning a corner, they saw a policeman standing some fifteen yards away and before Mein Host could stop it, he found himself inside the policeman's head, looking out from the man's eyes and watching this strange couple tottering toward him. As suspicion rose within the police officer, Mein Host removed himself as fast as possible, went back into his own body, and, gripping Jean's arm, hurried off down a side street.

Their mutual LSD explorations also revealed much deeper aspects of music. An evening of listening to Roland Kirk would transport them both into the very center of the music, weeping with the beauty and wonder of it.

Mein Host's heart was starting to open.

In the session that most interested me, while they were peaking on the LSD, Mein Host reached a state of such all-encompassing ego dissolution that he would afterward describe it as being completely immersed in the "White Light." Although he was profoundly moved by the experience, and I

knew it was the nearest he'd ever come to knowing God, he could neither understand nor assimilate it.

Something else kept happening as they worked their way through the sugar cubes, which was far more compelling and puzzling. For no apparent reason, a session that was ecstatic and revelatory would suddenly turn on my ward and become the most terrifying, horrifying experience imaginable. With no obvious change in set or setting, he would find himself deposited in some intolerable and hellish reality from which he could not escape. Aldous Huxley's work in *Heaven and Hell* might have been some comfort in a more rational state of mind, but reading about hell is altogether different from being there.

We angels draw closer to our charges when they are suffering, attempting to bring some peace to a tormented soul, however painful the process is for us. But this was clearly something else entirely. I could see that it was necessary for him to fully experience the impact of the entheogen with all its range of possibilities. In this case it was Mein Host's most terrible trips that got his attention. He simply couldn't understand why he found himself deposited in hell while Jean, a few feet away and just as profoundly affected by the LSD, was basking in heaven.

Readers with some understanding of entheogens will have little problem in recognizing that Mein Host's early imprints of fear, repressed by years of boarding school life, were starting to reveal themselves. Mein Host, however, didn't have the luxury of such relevant information and only had his intuition to tell him—whether he understood it or not—that the horror trips were a form of catharsis.

Oddly enough, these horrific events did not discourage him from continuing his entheogenic explorations. And experimentation it very much was. He recognized the immense power of these substances and from the start treated them with the respect they deserved. He could see that knowledge of the beneficial value of what was an ancient path—that of the shaman—had become lost, swamped by fear and trivial distractions, simply because of the modern world's moral cowardice and its need to control every aspect of life.

Yet again, this reinforced his feeling that the world was upside down.

Angels, it may be surprising for you to learn, have an abiding interest in

altered states of consciousness, because these states often allow us greater access to the consciousness of a human being. Thus, we do our best, whenever possible, to facilitate such encounters. And because in these realms "like attracts like," it wasn't long before Mein Host was being guided to meet people with similar interests.

In this case, Mein Host came to know a small group of expatriate American and Canadian artists and writers some years older than himself. Through them he found himself selected as one of the guinea pigs in a series of trials of powerful entheogenic substances—DMT (N,N-dimethyltriptamine), DET (N,N-diethyltryptamine), and ibogaine (tabernatha iboga)—conducted by a professor of organic chemistry at London University. The sessions were informal and held at the studio of one of the American artists, Mike Ross, with the professor dosing his subjects and then standing back and observing their strange and unpredictable reactions.

Yet another world opened to him. Objects suddenly came to life, skittering around the studio floor; and the ladder up to the sleeping loft began climbing itself in some strange and enchanted manner.

The speed with which the substances took effect after an intravenous injection was punishing to Mein Host's body, and, in his first encounter with DMT, a rapidly rising nausea drove him straight to the bathroom and down on his knees before the toilet. Vomit spewed out of him in one fluid movement. When he opened his eyes, there in the toilet bowl he saw a hundred unblinking blue eyes staring back at him from within the exquisite tracery formed by the streams of colorful puke.

This image made such an impression on him that he set out later to recreate this, and another persistent vision, in artwork. Trying to emulate the beautiful patterns formed by the vomit in the bottom of the bowl proved to be the most challenging. When he had finally achieved a visual semblance of the ever-changing matrix, he cut small ovals in the watercolor paper and mounted about thirty dolls' eyes so they gazed seamlessly out from the holes. When the piece was framed and on a wall, the slightest vibration caused the eyes to move and flicker, thoroughly disconcerting the viewer.

Many of these extreme experiences profoundly affected Mein Host's view of the world, confirming for him that something else far more profound was going on behind the scrim of reality. Like others before them, he and his

friends wondered to each other how such a thing could be. How could ordinary life proceed so completely unaware of these other dimensions of reality? How could such coherent and lucid encounters ever be dismissed as mere hallucinations?

This came to a head one evening when he was taken by one of his American friends to a party given by the singer Annie Ross—later of the trio Lamberts, Hendricks, and Ross. His friend Mike Ross (no relation to Annie) suggested that before they left for the party they grind up and eat a handful of morning glory seeds he'd heard contained a powerful entheogen. Mein Host has claimed subsequently that they consumed about 500 seeds each, but my more precise nature requires me to tell you that, in Mein Host's case, it was 482. Enough, however, to cause him to fall down on the floor in Ms. Ross's bedroom among the coats left by the guests and spilling over from the bed. I watched him lying there and knew I needed to make a move toward him or he might well become severely traumatized by the overdose. Little did I suspect what would happen next. He has since written the following about his own view of the event.

> On arriving at the party and feeling thoroughly nauseated I retired to the bedroom where I collapsed on the blue pile carpet. Soon the nausea passed and I opened my eyes. There, coiled within four feet of my face, was a large black and gold snake with glittering eyes and a flicking tongue.
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> I was immobilized with fear as the snake lazily unknotted itself and slid slowly toward me. We were both transfixed—the snake and I. It was as real and as solid as the book on which I am now writing. I could see the pile of the carpet separating under its long, sinuous body and the shine of its vertical pupils. I felt the lightness of its breath and its tongue playing on my face. Then, in one continuous movement, it pushed itself into and through my right eye. I could feel it in my head, its thick body still coiled on the floor, thrusting itself farther and farther into me.
>
> Next it was pushing and wriggling its way down into my throat and stomach, curling there for what felt like an eternity before reversing itself and forcing its head and body out through my wide-open mouth. I have mercifully blocked out whatever followed, but I have some trace memory

of becoming a nest to a family of snakes, of them entering and departing my body at will.

When I came to the next morning, my hair had started turning white. I was twenty-three years old.

Although Mein Host's horrified mind could only perceive me as a snake entering his body, it was the first time he actually took note of my existence. My intention was to comfort him, and perhaps I should have left him alone. In the long run, however, and looking back over his life, I believe that any initial confrontation with me was bound to be terrifying for him. But, as I say, at the very least, it did get his attention. He could never view the world in the same way again. He was left with a startling idea: If the snake was merely a hallucination, then what indeed was the nature of what human beings call reality?

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At this point I should fill in some basic facts about this little segment of the Local Universe, unfortunate though they may be. As you will have learned, at the time of the rebellion among the angels, one of the unanticipated outcomes was planetary isolation. The snake eating its own tail—the symbol of a closed system—was used to indicate the very real possibility that a subreality, detached from what was happening in the rest of the Local Universe, was being co-created by the Divine Mother to mask the fundamental reality. If this Gnostic concept turns out to be true, I can only imagine it was designed to act as a sort of playpen in which Lucifer and the rebels might do their worst without inflicting lasting damage on the authentic reality that lay underneath. This subreality, called *maya* by Vedic philosophers, would have been conveyed through the spiritual circuitry of the System of planets within which the rebellion was contained and which would have successfully isolated the System.

Because Lucifer was originally the celestial placed in charge of this Local System, it could be said that his nature—his reality—was built into the spiritual circuitry and the subtle energy currents that support planetary life. The rebellion, however, was to radically alter the orderly course of the development of intelligent life in this world. The natural flow of events was forever changed.

Those familiar with the elaborate cosmology of the Dogon tribe, in Mali—through the writings of the English astronomer Robert Temple—will recall that the Dogon maintain that they were visited by extraterrestrials from the star system Sirius some six thousand years ago. Among much else, the Dogon were told that life on this planet was regarded by the visitors, the Nommo, as an "interrupted creation." However, nothing much is made in the text of this odd assertion. If the Dogon had but known it, the "interruption" referred to was in fact the rebellion among the angels.

At this point, largely thanks to Mein Host's (and others') insights, I can now more fully appreciate that the rebellion and all that ensued had a purpose and meaning beyond anything we knew at the time. But back then it seemed only that some subtle energy was pointing us toward Lucifer's revolutionary way of thinking. After all, how could such high and splendid celestials be so misguided?

At the time this world was isolated, the Most Highs saw to it that certain incoming cosmic energies—part of the main datastream intended to inform the human mind of the larger picture—was cut off from reaching humans. Instead, this constant stream of information was redirected to the Devic kingdom. Certain plant spirits received the catalytic ability, when interacting with the human psyche, to draw out the Indwelling Spirit, the Atman, that lives in every human being of sound mind and spirit.

While I am bringing up the Atman, a Vedic word for the Divine Indwelling Spirit, I should try to clarify the confusion that many human beings have over this Indwelling Spirit. This is truly one of the great mysteries of the Multiverse. How the Creator could place a part of Itself in the very lowest form of intelligent life in the Multiverse cannot be explained, even by the Melchizedeks in their universities.

The Atman does not enter the mind of a child until the child is old enough to make moral decisions, to know right from wrong. Generally this is somewhere around the age of four or five, and earlier in more developed children. For reincarnates like my ward, the Atman will sometimes join the vehicle at a far younger age, if the environment is sufficiently stressful. This event can also be thought of as the true start of a child's life.

Although Mein Host doesn't know quite when he was joined by his own Atman—he maintains that it feels like forever—he did have the chance much

later in his life to experience and observe this Divine Spirit enter a child on the stoop in front of a house in Toronto.

My ward was sitting a few steps down on the wood porch while the four-year-old son of one of his friends was prancing about on the deck above him. The boy had just seen an ant and was raising his foot to step on it when Mein Host asked the child how he would like to be treated by someone so much larger than himself. With that he stood up to his more than six feet height, looming over the child while the four-year-old considered the logic of the question. After a couple of seconds the child slowly and carefully put his foot back down. There was a slight, almost imperceptible gust of wind and suddenly, it seemed to Mein Host, as he said later, there was an entirely new sparkle in the child's eyes.

However, back in his early twenties and well before this event, it was going to be entheogens that broke open my ward's head and introduced him to the transcendent reality for the first time.

5

The Power of Hypnosis

Angelic Intervention, Living by Wits, System Isolation, Nature of Betrayal, and Meeting the Teachers

Unfortunately, power plants—entheogens in general—have been prohibited by the authorities and ignored or dismissed by science in so much of the Western world. It is not my place to comment on the causes of this disaster, nor on the intentions of those who work to maintain the status quo, but merely to point to the sad consequences of this blanket prohibition. The obvious factors—like the growing prison-industrial complex, police corruption, terrorist funding, and the wasting of billions of dollars a year on a hopeless and ill-conceived war on drugs—all cloak a less obvious but equally insidious consequence. By prohibiting you from making intelligent choices in your own life, you are easily controlled and dictated to. This is precisely the opposite of having authentic freedom of choice. Having real freedom to choose requires you to grow up. To be deprived of this keeps you dependent on the very authorities you have allowed to dominate you.

Yet, over recent years, as I am coming to see the more positive workings of the Divine Plan, I can more fully understand how the very prohibitions themselves have created an interest among many young people of a curious and adventurous nature in various cultures.

However, without wise guidance, experiencing altered states of consciousness for a human mind can initially be extremely disconcerting. Using entheogens, wiser societies than this one have initiated their young into the mysteries and the ways of the Higher Mind in rituals and specific observances. This gave the children an early sense of who they were and what they were on the planet to accomplish.

This brings me back to Mein Host’s encounter with the snakes, the single most horrifying experience in a life not without its psychic and physical

wounds. He didn’t discover for many years that it was actually an initiation. What stayed with him most strongly was the further realization that reality, as he had come to think of it, was far stranger and more malleable than he, or anyone else, had any idea. If an apparently quite real snake could push its way into his eye and almost choke him as it went down his throat, then what couldn’t happen?

It also made him more curious than ever.

Mein Host found architectural college to be unexpectedly stimulating after the constant repression of his previous boarding school years. He made friends easily, and, as will happen in college, small groups formed with shared interests. Mein Host, to his surprise, found himself in the clique with seven or eight of the brightest and most imaginative students of that year.

He became closest, possibly, to Robert Moor. Articulate, with a fine, analytical, mind, Robert was some six years older than Mein Host and had already fulfilled his National Service obligations—the draft—by serving with the British Army in Burma. Although he was equipped with high intelligence, like many young Englishmen who came through the elitist educational system, Robert was out of touch with his real feelings. He lived almost entirely in his mind.

Robert also had no experience, and little interest, in joining Mein Host in his exploration of altered states of consciousness but brought with him a leveling foil that complemented and stabilized the younger man’s more mercurial intelligence. They made a good team on several of the projects undertaken in those first three years at architectural school and became close friends in the coffeehouses of an about-to-be swinging London.

The third year in English architectural schools ended with the first major set of exams, the Intermediates, which were then followed by a year of working in an architectural office. Being immersed in the hands-on, practical side of working drawings of drains and window details was believed to curb any overimaginative flights of fancy in bumptious students.

Mein Host, predictably, found office life increasingly tedious, but once again, I was able to arrange for him to meet someone who was to have a subtle, yet powerful, impact on his life.

After the events in his early years, Mein Host had developed a thoroughly

jaundiced view of the older generation. Not only was this the prevalent mood of the 1960s, one of the mantras of that time was “Never trust anyone over thirty,” but his first three years at architectural college did little to change his attitude. So, when he originally spotted an elderly man on the other side of the enormous open drafting office, his head bowed over working drawings, my ward didn’t take any immediate interest. Then he noticed that no one else in the office of some sixty-five people showed any interest in the old man either, and his contrarian curiosity and natural sympathy for the outcast overruled any ageist bias.

Alex Armstrong—Mein Host never knew Alex’s original German name—was born in the early twentieth century in Germany and grew up as a child during the First World War. He studied architecture at the Bauhaus, first under Walter Gropius and then under Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, while Hitler was coming to power in the 1920s and early 1930s. Although he was not Jewish, he was horrified by the Nazi agenda and soon became one of those courageous young Germans who actively opposed the dictatorship.

Over regular shared lunchtimes, Alex opened up and finally talked freely to someone about this terrifying period in his life. While it never occurred to Mein Host in all the time he knew Alex, I was aware that the German had never been able to tell anyone else what he was telling the younger man, who he must have sensed had gone through a hell of his own.

The tragic irony of this elderly man, so elegantly trained by the best architects of the twentieth century and now laboring over the most quotidian of window details, touched the boy’s heart. But it was Alex’s stories about Hitler that truly intrigued him.

Alex had attended one of the massive rallies staged by the Nazis at Nuremberg, and he was so hypnotized by the power of the rhetoric that he stood up and saluted, to his eternal shame, arm stiffly outstretched, with all the other tens of thousands of fanatics on the parade ground. He’d gone, so he told Mein Host, purely to see firsthand what Hitler was all about, and in spite of his repugnance and hatred for the Nazis, he found himself literally carried to his feet by the enthusiasm of the enormous crowd.

His reflexive reaction terrified Alex.

He felt that he saw the true face of evil, and it was up to him to do something about it. Although Alex was a gentle man, he and his small group

of friends—some drawn from the students he knew at the Bauhaus before it closed down and moved—plotted to assassinate the dictator. By Alex's account, they made nine attempts on Hitler's life, with no success whatsoever. Admittedly, they were amateurs; Alex was apologetic about that. They thought that by placing bombs under manholes on the street where Hitler's limousine traveled, they would surely blow him up. For one reason or another, it never worked out that way.

Alex would shake his head in wonderment whenever he returned to the subject. What had first puzzled, and then amazed, the earnest young assassins was how every single time they planted their bomb, Hitler changed the route at the last moment.

"Whatever was going on?" Alex wondered, still mystified after all these years. They were certain there were no spies among them. No one knew what they were up to; there was no indiscreet pillow talk. "How in God's name did Hitler do it? Was he telepathic? Was he protected by evil spirits? How could this keep happening?"

Although the group was the least fanciful of people, they, too, came to believe, though for different reasons from the German masses, that there was something supernatural about Hitler.

I observed Mein Host carefully as he listened to Alex's stories. What touched him most deeply was the trajectory of this unfortunate man's life—from years of living underground as a hunted man in Nazi Germany, to fighting in the war on the British side and becoming a naturalized citizen, to making England his home, and now ending up in his sixties a sad and broken man.

Although Alex never claimed to have been a communist, I could tell that he was holding back the truth of this from his new young friend. That affiliation had contributed to some of the difficulties he faced after the war. Mein Host was satisfied with Alex's explanation that work hadn't come easily to a German living in a country so recently at war with his homeland. To make matters worse, Alex would say, after studying at the Bauhaus—the most revered architectural school in the world—he found that he was required to go back to college for a degree in England if he wanted to practice in his adopted country.

Alex was completely alone. His friends from the prewar days and his

family were dead or lost in the chaos of the war. A brief marriage had collapsed some years earlier, and he'd given up on ever finding a companion or another wife.

He was a crushed man, beaten down by disappointment and failure. The dreams he surely had as a young student at the Bauhaus, once the vanguard of the modern style in architecture, all came to nothing. His proclaimed atheism was offering him no comfort or support, and, as far as Mein Host could make out, Alex still hadn't forgiven himself for not managing to kill Hitler. When he had three or more drinks in him, Alex would circle endlessly in the fixed tracks of self-recrimination, stoked, too, by his shame at having given in so easily to Hitler's charisma. Then, later on, he'd be appalled at his weakness ever to have considered, even for a moment, the Führer as anything more than an exceptionally cunning and evil human being.

My ward had never met, or come to know, anyone quite like Alex. The man's raw emotional honesty was something he hadn't encountered before in his typically repressed English background. I could appreciate what Mein Host wasn't able to at the time—that the energy blockage frozen around his heart, formed as a protective layer by a child's ego, was starting at last to melt. His natural human kindness was being ignited by the depth of his sympathy for Alex.

Never having known his own father—who would have been almost an exact contemporary of Alex—Mein Host, without realizing it consciously, was having the opportunity to get to know someone who also followed his father's tragic life trajectory. Alex's dreams as a young Bauhaus student were dashed by Hitler's rise to power, and he never really recovered from it. George, Mein Host's absent father, saw his dreams of being a fighter pilot melt away in the exigencies of war, and he, too, never really recovered, dying young in his early fifties.

Because I knew Mein Host better than he knew himself at that point, I was able to detect a subtly different attitude toward architecture emerging as a result of his friendship with Alex. Being naturally spontaneous and enjoying studying the craft, my ward hadn't given much thought to his own budding career. But the tedium he felt working in the office, at the very bottom of the architectural ladder—together with the depressing sight of his German friend, trained by the most brilliant architects in the world, slaving away alongside

him on equally monotonous detailed work—was already starting to generate a feeling of doubt.

These concerns had barely yet risen to the surface of his consciousness, but I could tell from the tone of his voice and the way he used his body that he was looking much more deeply into what his life was truly about and whether he'd fallen into architecture merely to fulfill his mother's ambitions for him. Not only had she married an architect, but George, her husband, was himself the son of an architect. She was having a long-term relationship with the well-known Canadian architect Wells Coates and always became a little coy when talking about her quick fling with Le Corbusier. Corb, as he preferred to be called by his intimates, did an elegant, small, colored-pencil drawing of Diana playing the Spanish guitar, which has long since disappeared into the private collection of a covetous friend of Mein Host.

His long three-month summer vacations were giving the young man the time to travel extensively through a variety of different cultures. His taste for mind-altering substances was running parallel with what was soon to become groovy London. So it was that on his journeys through Morocco or Turkey he would end up with a variety of substances to take home with him. This led naturally to a few judicious sales to friends and, of course, to friends of friends. It was all quite innocent, and the substances were treated with the respect they were due.

Most importantly, because there was an outlaw edge to bringing the material into the country, he learned the value of personal honesty in all his dealings.

Mein Host made a conscious decision not to turn his casual smuggling into a business. In his view, entheogens were far too special—too sacred, although that wasn't a word he would have used—to commodify and from which to try to make a profit. Fortuitously, at that time the authorities had little interest in a lone student traveler who was simply helping out a few friends, though he did have several close calls.

Because Watchers enjoy a good story as much as humans, here I'd like to chronicle two telling incidents—one in which Joy, one of his companion angels, needed to take some action, and the other which succeeded as a result of Mein Host's own quick wits. Both illustrate how close these calls were.

The first occurred as the result of a well-meaning, but thoughtless, gift. Without telling him, a friend slipped a single joint into my ward's jacket pocket in the cab on the way to one of New York's airports. Going through airport security, he was told to empty the contents of his pockets into a basket proffered by the uniformed female official. Confidently emptying his pockets one by one, there was the joint sitting in the basket, along with his money and keys. "It was one of those moments," he told his friends afterward, "when time slows down." He looked up at the woman to find that she was staring fixedly at a point on the ceiling high over his left shoulder. Without thinking he reached fluidly into the basket, returned the joint to his pocket, and walked smoothly through the metal detector.

What he hasn't known until now is that the woman's attention became distracted as a result of a momentary piece of coordinated action between the official's angels and Joy. If this disturbs some readers concerned with their personal autonomy and privacy, I can only remind you that angels play a far greater role in your lives than your current understanding probably allows. A human lifetime is a collaborative affair. Just as your physical body is a collaborative system of cooperating organs, so your spiritual body hosts a collaborating group of spirit entities.

The second incident occurred later in Mein Host's life, when he was traveling regularly to Australia to spend the summer on the New South Wales coast, studying and swimming with a pod of coastal dolphins. Finding hashish an invaluable tool for the telepathic explorations he was doing with the dolphins, he made the point of traveling with a six months' supply. It was not a large amount: he had no intention of selling any. He was traveling with it purely for his own research purposes.

On arriving in Sydney and waiting with the crowd of other passengers in the baggage claim area, he noticed a uniformed woman with a small dog pulling eagerly on a leash. The dog suddenly sat down next to one of the bags already off the conveyor, and Mein Host watched while two plainclothes policemen were gestured over by the woman. Because the dog had done his job, the woman jerked at his leash, and off he was again running, zigzagging with his nose to the ground, and heading inexorably toward where my ward was standing.

It had been a long journey—more than twenty hours in the air—and there

was little doubt the hashish, although well-wrapped and bandaged around his waist under his shirt, was by this time exuding its scent. The dog certainly seemed to think so.

And here's where the intuitive cunning of the young man came out.

Mein Host waited until the dog was a couple of feet away from him before going down on his knees to scoop the creature up into his arms, cooing and cuddling the dog, pulling it to him, smothering its nose in the scent of the hash, and returning its joyful slobbering, lick for lick.

Horrified and clearly disgusted, the policewoman pulled furiously on the animal's lead, shouting at Mein Host to leave the dog alone, thank you very much! So saying, she dragged the dog off in the opposite direction.

True entheogens were still legal in the early 1960s in England largely because in those pre-Leary days so few people knew about them. While heroin was readily available for addicts with a doctor's script, marijuana and hashish were just starting to become more generally known and had been made illegal. Europe in general followed this principle with slight differences in the law from country to country. In short, the general approach of the authorities to mind-altering substances in Europe during the early to mid-1960s were relatively relaxed, and those using the substances were most often serious-minded and respectful of entheogens, following along Aldous Huxley's approach of using entheogens as psychological and spiritual tools for personal illumination. The only substances the authorities were really interested in, the opiates, never held any attraction for Mein Host. He was at a stage of development in which he needed to know everything. The idea of using opiates to blot out reality ran so counter to what was driving him that the people he came across who were using heroin or morphine might well have come from a different planet. Because addicts in London could legally purchase heroin at a pharmacy at that time, he was able to observe the effects of the long-term use of heroin free of the stress of criminalization.

He came to know the Scottish writer Alexander Trocchi, who picked up a heroin habit some years earlier and never wrote anything of value after *Cain's Book*, which he published in 1961, a few years before Mein Host met him. Trocchi was always talking about writing the most important book of his life, and yet Mein Host couldn't help but notice that he was never actually writing it.

There was a profound lesson in this that the younger man took to heart. Life was starting to open up like a flower for him, and what he'd seen and felt in those tumultuous entheogenic experiences would color his entire life. He had no desire to dull the excitement and intensity of his creativity, and he ended up privately grateful to Alex Trocchi for making the effects of long-term addiction so painfully obvious.

Mein Host had left his mother's apartment by this time and was living with Vicky—his first serious girlfriend—in a large house with eight other male students and a shifting patchwork of their girlfriends. The group of them had purchased the tail end of a lease for almost nothing, prior to the building being demolished in four years' time. The magnificent mansion was on Bayswater Road, overlooking Hyde Park, and it rapidly became the center of activity for some of the best and brightest minds in a city that was soon to explode with a rebirth of creativity. After Mein Host met them in Tangier, William S. Burroughs and his young English lover, Ian Sommerville, became regular visitors. This started a stream of writers and artists and conversations, fueled by hash, wine, and coffee—and sometimes acid—that might continue for days.

After experiencing the repression and pessimism of so much of English society, the American ex-pats had a depth of interest in life and a passion for living that precisely matched Mein Host's nature. Although he couldn't have known it at the time, I could tell that the attraction of America was just starting to make itself felt.

Toward the end of their time in the mansion, an event occurred that was to puzzle Mein Host for many years. Vicky, the girlfriend he'd been living with for the previous four years in one of the rooms of the house, fell in love with one of Mein Host's closest friends.

Chester Jones was living on his own in another of the many rooms. He was also an architectural student and had become a modestly successful male model to earn his keep. Without anything having been said—and Mein Host was unaware of what was going on behind his back—he returned one day to find that Vicky had simply moved downstairs to share Chester's room with him.

This was the first time Mein Host had been betrayed in love, and it called

up in him a mix of emotions he hadn’t experienced before. His pride was hurt and he was angry, of course, but also he blamed himself for not spotting the deception when the affair first started. Yet, to his surprise, his self-recrimination was largely muted by a profound sense of relief. After the initial fury dissipated, he realized with a shock how much better suited for each other Vicky and Chester were. Mein Host had loved the girl as much as he could over the years they were together, but his heart was still so closed off that it was not altogether surprising that Vicky turned elsewhere.

As they were all continuing to live in the same house, they constantly bumped into one another in the communal kitchen. And because Chester and my ward still had three years of college together, there was no choice but to remain cordial with each other.

This became clear to the young man one evening a couple of weeks after the split as he was walking back along Bayswater Road in the rain. In spite of knowing with his rational mind that the breakup was for the best of all, and he needed to admit to himself that he was getting increasingly bored with Vicky, he still found himself unaccountably miserable. Tears mixed with the rain, and passing cars threw up curtains of spray as he wandered listlessly back to the house, to see them together, yet again, happy and in love.

Mein Host would have been astonished at the time to learn that the gentle prompting of one of his companion angels made him suddenly aware, in what I’ve heard him describe as a flash of inspiration, that the self-pity he was feeling was an unnecessary and sentimental indulgence. With a new maturity, he understood that he needn’t be a victim of his emotions. While it was important to feel the emotions, to experience them as profoundly as possible, he realized as he was plodding through the drizzle that he was capable of mastering these emotions. He knew he had a choice over whether to continue feeling miserable or to pull himself out of it.

The clarity of this revelation—which I was only privy to when I heard him describing the occurrence to a friend afterward—stopped him in his tracks. With the rain pouring down his face, I watched him as he raised his right hand and snapped his fingers together. His mood changed immediately, and his stride picked up as he drew nearer to the house. When he arrived and met the couple in the kitchen, he was a changed man. He’d come to the understanding on his way home that what seemed to be a terrible betrayal of

trust had, in fact, liberated him from a relationship that was reaching a natural ending anyway. The betrayal merely accelerated the breakup, and he found himself grateful to both of them for precipitating the split.

Within a few months the lease came to an end, and it was time to find new accommodations. Because the building was due to be razed, there was no hesitation in throwing the party of the year. A demolition party, they called it, as word spread around the hip community of London.

This was in early November—Guy Fawkes Day falls on November 5—so there were plenty of fireworks available. The ballroom of the house was well over a 150 feet long, and the temptation to shoot fireworks from one end of the room to the other soon gave way to a tracery of the fiery trails of rockets and colorful bursts of incendiary color. Teams of people, gathered spontaneously at either end of the dark ballroom, frantically ignited every firework they'd brought to the party. The electricity was already shut off, so the flashes and explosions lit up the laughing, hysterical faces and the writhing bodies of people ducking and twisting to avoid the missiles.

While it seemed shockingly dangerous to those of us silently watching, no one was hurt. Mein Host felt it was an appropriately expressive and fiery ending to an important phase in his young life.

During his year of working in an office, Mein Host had lost contact with his friend Robert. Unbeknownst to him, Robert had lost interest in architecture and had been swept up by Scientology at a time when L. Ron Hubbard, its founder, was living and practicing at the cult's headquarters in the town of East Grinstead.

Only when Mein Host returned to college did he discover that Robert had dropped out, as had more than half the students who had started the course four years earlier. Mein Host was sad and puzzled, because his friend had offered no clue that he was going to give up on architecture. He just seemed to disappear, moving from his apartment, divorcing his wife, leaving his children behind, and vanishing. These would be children he would not see again until many years later. Like Mein Host, who has remained biologically childless throughout his life, Robert was a man who really should never have brought children into the world. As the two men have long lost contact with one another, my ward says he can only hope his old friend became more

paternal as he aged.

Soon the pressure of work took over Mein Host's life. And because the little clique that was so successful over the first three years broke up due to Robert's absence, Mein Host now started working far more on his own. This gave him a chance to expand into more adventurous projects and to express himself free of Robert's more conservative, restraining hand.

Hallucorama, the Lucid Dream Theater mentioned earlier, which Mein Host conceived and designed in his fifth year, turned out to be of great interest to the Angels of Technology, because it wrestled with a way of introducing an experience of the multilevel nature of reality through the medium of entertainment. As a result, his research was smoothed out and facilitated by them, so when it came to presenting the project at the end of the year he was able to make a very convincing case for what he ended up calling the Pleasure Dome.

He would never have had any idea, for example, of the angelic coordination required to bring him together with the cybernetician Gordon Pask and for the older man to take him seriously enough to spend time helping to design the feedback circuits necessary to make the theater function.

* * *

Watchers have often discussed whether mortal beings would benefit from knowing how active we are in their lives. We have observed that even in those belief systems that include angels in their cosmologies, there are very few among them that regard us as real, living beings. In a system like Kabbalah, which does acknowledge us as physical beings—albeit living in a different dimension or on a different material plane—the only people permitted by Jewish religious law to make close contact with us had to be mature men with a full experience of life.

There is good reason for this. It is not for us to live your life for you. Yes, we guide you gently toward those people and experiences that further your spiritual awakening, but we can only serve and support the choices you make in your life. Unless specifically instructed, we can never interfere with your choices. If a person continues to make poor choices, for example, we simply step back and allow the consequences of those decisions to play out in the

person’s life.

Angels take your freedom to choose the quality of your life on a moment-by-moment basis very seriously indeed. Also, knowing that many humans, for a variety of reasons, choose to learn their spiritual lessons from personal tragedy and the catastrophic events they invite into their lives allows us to take the longer view. We know everything ultimately works out for the best, given time and patience. What we don’t know is how this is going to happen.

This might sound lacking in compassion to some. After all, if we are so marvelously farsighted, why can’t we steer people away from the disasters that ruin their lives? While under extraordinary circumstances we’ve been known to do so, the truth is that only those who are sensitive to our whispers and who trust their intuitions are likely to pay any attention. And that, too, is as it’s meant to be.

The reader might want to ponder that the World Trade Center had only a quarter of the overall number of people who might have been anticipated to be in their offices on that fateful day in 2001. Mein Host personally knew four different people working in the towers who, for one reason or another, found themselves delayed on that September 11. His friend, Genesis P-Orridge, the English performance artist, for example, told Mein Host that he and his wife decided to stay in bed and make love rather than go as planned to the gym in one of the towers that day.

Part of the confusion existing within the human mind regarding the reality of angels finds its roots in the seeming chaos and dangers of modern life. We understand how challenging it must be to maintain your faith in the goodness of the Creator when you appear to be surrounded by injustice, violence, and cruelty. But this is to misunderstand the nature of free will. What you see in the world around you are the consequences of generations of poor choices and decisions. As you’ve probably observed from your own lives, poor choices often have a way of yielding to even poorer choices, as you struggle to bring yourself back into balance after a serious misjudgment.

The errors and sins of one generation invariably impact the next and then are frequently compounded by the poor decisions of subsequent generations. Considering that there have been more than ten thousand generations of humanity since the time of the angelic rebellion and the quarantine of the planet, it’s not altogether surprising that this is such a difficult and troubled

world.

Yet, as chaotic as it might appear to human eyes, there is an underlying order to even the darkest of worlds. The Most Highs make use of every opportunity to build on the true, the good, and the beautiful, and some even say they enjoy the challenges posed by angelic rebellions with perhaps a little too much relish.

Since the planetary quarantine has been in effect, the knowledge that you live in a benign, inhabited Multiverse, teeming with life in the inner and outer worlds, has been withheld from you. This knowledge is part of your mortal heritage. Yes, you have seen glimpses. Teachers have emerged throughout the course of history who spoke about other levels of reality. Shamans the world over have shown a working ability to travel in these subtle realms. Yet this is very different from an everyday awareness that there is always a wise brother or sister to whom you can turn, a visitor from another world with a viewpoint wider than yours, governments you can trust to reflect the highest aspirations of your species, and personal companion angels with whom to consult in challenging moral dilemmas. Thus is life on the multitude of planets not touched by rebellion.

In some ways these appear to be utopian worlds, free of war, injustice, and pestilence. Yet even the most rigidly conservative of administrative angels would have to admit that the very lack of challenges in these worlds can impede the spiritual and moral development of their mortal inhabitants.

I've come to believe that the decision to isolate this entire System of planets, when only thirty-seven of them followed Lucifer into rebellion, speaks exactly to this point. Although few would have known, or admitted to it at the time, what appeared to many of us as an unjust punishment occurred for a constructive reason. It allowed for a wider sphere of experimentation. And make no mistake: this is a massive experiment. It's now generally known among us that this phase of the development of intelligent life in the Multiverse will soon be drawing to a close. I suspect, although I wasn't privy to any of the planning, that there might have been a specific intention to accelerate evolution on certain planets by throwing their planetary populations back on their own resources.

If I follow this line of thinking, it further leads to the conclusion that the rebellion will have been permitted to occur by those in overall control of the

destiny of this Local Universe. But I am well aware of how radical this concept is.

* * *

Mein Host had almost forgotten about Robert when, toward the middle of his sixth year in architecture school and deep into his thesis project of designing a film school, he received a phone call, completely unexpectedly, from his old friend.

Robert talked about how his life had completely changed, that he was remarried and now deeply involved with Scientology. He was anxious to see Mein Host again, catch up with all the news of their lives, and introduce him to Mary Ann, his new wife.

Mein Host was extremely busy at this time, so it was more than a week later before he was able to catch the subway down to South Kensington and walk the few blocks in the drizzle to the place the couple were now living. Climbing the stairs to the apartment, he was enthusiastically greeted by Robert. The two friends were clearly happy and excited to see each other again. On entering the apartment, Robert turned to introduce his new wife, who was sitting in an upholstered armchair as bright red as her fingernails. Older than Robert by a few years, Mary Ann had the look of a woman trying a little too hard to appear glamorous. Not knowing what to expect, I could see that Mein Host was shocked by Robert's wife. He lurched back, almost tripping over a chair leg before recovering, rearranging his face, and stretching out his hand in greeting.

Mary Ann, who apparently was sensitive to what others thought about her appearance, noticed his initial reaction and, as will become evident, filed it away in her mind. The young man was well enough schooled in English manners to contain his immediate and visceral dislike of this woman, so after taking the offered chair, he was able to continue a conversation over cups of coffee and numerous cigarettes.

He'd never met anyone like Mary Ann before. She was older than he'd imagined—probably somewhere in her mid-thirties, he told his friends later. This represented a considerable gap in life experience for a lad of twenty-three summers.

"No, she's not that pretty," he replied to their questions. "Not unattractive,

but she’s got a kind of used look. She’s obviously been around a bit. Frankly, I still can’t see what Robert’s doing with her. And she was covered with the sort of expensive jewelry that ends up looking cheap. Too much makeup and all that perfume! Know what I mean?”

They knew exactly what he meant. In a country still as class-conscious as England in the early 1960s, those who tried to pass themselves off as upper class were readily ridiculed. Yet for all her almost comical attempts to look like a wealthy, upper-class Englishwoman, there were those blazing green eyes, framed in a broad face with a sharp, predatory nose.

She didn’t stand up when being introduced, and because she consistently gestured for her husband to get the coffee, Mein Host wasn’t able to see if she was a tall woman. Curled in the voluminous armchair, smoke spiraling up from one cigarette after another, she appeared both physically frail and, at the same time, a dominating, powerful presence who captivated her audience with brilliant insights and the raw intensity of her interest. While she could never be called a beautiful woman, and *pretty* would have been deeply insulting to her, she did have an aquiline clarity to her, and when she stood to say good-bye, he could see it was important for her to hold her small body firmly upright in a queenly pose.

Mein Host was struck by her astonishing intuitive intelligence and flattered by her obvious interest in him, while at the same time finding that he disliked her intensely. He was unaware, on a conscious level, that Mary Ann’s dominating presence was challenging his entire relationship with male authority figures. This was made all the more confusing because she was such a powerful woman.

This extreme ambivalence characterized his relationship with Mary Ann for some years to come. He was both drawn to her and repelled by her. He was no snob by any means, so it wasn’t that she grew up in the Gorbals—the worst of the Glasgow slums—that he found so off-putting. It was the crass manner in which she presented herself, mimicking the way she thought rich and sophisticated women looked. There was something embarrassingly obvious to Mein Host about the masquerade, yet she carried it off with such self-confidence that he later came to believe the dissonance was her own conscious decision. But that was after he came to know her much better.

Here was his friend Robert, no slouch in the intellectual department,

evidently completely entranced by the woman. Of course, Mein Host wanted to give his old friend the benefit of the doubt. He sat down, drank their coffee, and listened to the plans the couple were evolving for a new form of psychotherapy. Mary Ann did most of the talking, interspersing her explanation with questions that seemed to my ward to go to the very heart of the issues just starting to concern him.

“What is the point in designing beautiful buildings when the world appears to be falling apart?” she asked. “How can you expect to transform the world without transforming yourself first?” And later: “Robert tells me you’re too creative and too original to waste yourself on architecture.” And: “Are you doing what you really want to do with your life?”

Cajoled by her interest and the way she picked the questions out of his head, questions he was barely conscious of himself, and unaware at that point in his short life of the cunning of a manipulative woman, he decided there was something strangely magnetic about Mary Ann. So he listened with mounting interest as they told him of their time in Scientology and what they had learned through it.

Knowing nothing about Scientology, the mass-market science fiction writer L. Ron Hubbard’s spin-off from his bestselling self-help book, *Dianetics,* the lad settled back and sipped his third coffee as the pair filled him in on some of the basic principles of Hubbard’s thinking with which they agreed.

Mary Ann, who was in the cult longer than Robert and met and married him while they were both involved, was talking about their difference of opinion on how Hubbard was using the E-meter. They explained that an E-meter was the device Hubbard had developed to measure skin resistance. It functioned as a kind of lie detector, as they described it, except that they were using it to explore their own personal unconscious material.

“All very well,” Mary Ann was saying, her Scottish accent breaking through momentarily. “The device is effective enough, but Hubbard’s using it all wrong. He’s trying to match everybody else’s replies to the list of questions he’s come up with, with his own answers. Completely missing the point.”

Mein Host wondered aloud whether he might be missing the point, too. “What do you mean, Mary Ann, matching up replies to his questions?

Whose?”

“Hubbard’s!” She spat out his name with an unexpected vehemence. “It’s a crime what he’s doing . . .” She was starting to say something but stopped suddenly at a sharp glance from Robert.

There was an awkward silence before Robert went back to describing the E-meter and how it worked. What emerged, as far as Mein Host could grasp, was that this device was able to detect slight changes in electrical resistance occurring when the emotional and mental mass—Hubbard called it condensed energy—came to conscious attention. Put simply, it offered a window into what was stored in the unconscious mind—all the desires and fears lurking under the surface of everyday life. Through skillful questioning, the auditor—as Scientology called its therapists—guided people to the emotional blockages that prevented them from living up to their full potential.

“And yet there’s Hubbard,” Mary Ann cut in, “and he’s using this marvelous little machine to create cloned versions of himself! Can you believe it?! The size of the man’s ego! He thinks he’s God Almighty! It’s obvious that each person is going to have his or her own different goals in life. Of course, that’s not what he’s interested in!”

Mein Host looked puzzled, so Robert broke in reassuringly, “But that’s not how we’re using it.”

“We’ve discovered how to use it right,” Mary Ann said, leaning forward now, her voice quieter and more intimate, and it seemed to me that she was fixing Mein Host with her remarkable green eyes. “We’ve found how to really help people, not just turn them into robots!” Mary Ann finished with a triumphant gesture, looking expectantly at the young man.

In spite of his distaste for the woman, her idea did sound intriguing to him. His many hours of answering questions from the student therapists at the Psychological Institute familiarized him with how intelligent questioning could throw light on issues that concerned him. The problem was that the questions never went deep enough. Perhaps this E-meter they were so enthusiastic about might be the answer to this. It sounded as if the machine was able to pick up on much more deeply buried energy blockages than anything the student psychologists could unearth.

Mary Ann then announced that she and Robert were planning to leave Scientology and start their own psychotherapy practice. Would Mein Host be open to being a guinea pig for them? It would give them a chance to see whether the processes they found so effective in working on themselves could be useful and helpful to others. The sessions were to be held twice weekly, an hour each, and, most important to Mein Host, they would be free. His natural curiosity and his desire to see more of Robert made it an easy decision, and he readily agreed.

After making the arrangements for the first session and preparing to leave, Mein Host did something that would have been considered graceless in a more mature man, and he really should have known better. I can only speculate that his aversion to Mary Ann must have needed to make itself felt.

Before getting up, Mary Ann noticed the young man studying her neck and throat with more than normal interest and asked him what he was looking at.

“Oh, I just read somewhere,” he replied guilelessly, “that you can tell the age of a woman by the creases and wrinkles in her neck.”

If I could cringe, I would have when I heard him say this. I could see that it evoked an immediate and angry response in Mary Ann, which she quickly repressed before Mein Host realized he may have said something thoughtless and needlessly cruel. Had he been a little more perceptive and a little less flattered by Mary Ann’s attention, Mein Host might well have simply walked out of the apartment and never looked back—thus saving himself a great deal of trouble and the next radical shift in his young life.

But that isn’t how life works, especially for a young reincarnate who didn’t yet know that he was himself a rebel angel, and who would have laughed and dismissed the concept as ridiculous.

However, he didn’t have any choice in the matter, because, unbeknownst to his conscious mind, he’d agreed to help form what was soon to become a spiritual community with Mary Ann and his friend Robert.

6

Arrival of the Superhumans

Telepathic Blowback, Goal of Life, Midwayer Activities and a Rescue, and the Chakra System

I have already talked about my arrival on this world, accompanying the Prince and his one hundred staff members more than 500,000 years ago on their mission to gradually uplift the consciousness of the indigenous natives. Unlike the staff with their material bodies, as an angel I had the chance to visit this planet a couple of times before the main party arrived.

In many ways it was a glorious time. We were all hand-picked for this work and proud to have been chosen out of thousands of volunteers. We were excited to be going into action at last after all the training and couldn't wait to settle into our new home.

It was a beautiful world—fresh and bright—unspoiled by the industrial pollution I've witnessed on another, slightly more advanced planet. Of all the worlds I've visited, I've never seen such a profusion of different life-forms as I found in your world. Amid all the beauty, however, lurked a dark side: it seemed as if every living creature was killing and feeding off another living creature—a horrific ladder of death—but I knew I needed to get used to it. However real the planetary experiences appeared in the holographic vivaria back when the staff was preparing for the mission, I was amused to observe that nothing could have quite readied them for either the splendor, or the danger, they would discover when they finally set foot on terra firma.

So it was that for all its lakes and waterfalls; its palm-fringed, sunbathed beaches and groves of ancient cedars; the warm, welcoming oceans and the rushing rivers—for all this natural magnificence, the Prince's staff quickly found planetary life unexpectedly challenging.

In spite of being briefed on the conditions they would meet when they started to work on this primitive world, they were not finding it easy to

understand, or adapt to, the levels of fear they were encountering among the natives. Even the hundred splendid specimens of humanity, from whom the material bodies of the staff were cloned, became irrationally terrified if confronted by something that baffled them.

Because the staff was telepathic, each of them had to discover for themselves a way to handle the “noise,” the emotional turbulence swimming around them, that could make being telepathic so painful. Their hundred modified human companions didn’t appear to have the same problem, and it was generally thought, because they’d been living on the planet prior to the arrival of the staff, that they naturally possessed the ability to tune out the noise. In those first few hundred years, however, this constant emotional disturbance was a perennial problem for the staff.

You understand the difficulty here. Being naturally telepathic, the staff was dependent on the closeness of the bonding such a level of consciousness allows. They barely ever spoke to one another: it simply wasn’t necessary. The sight was enchanting to witness—these beautiful creatures gliding around and about their tasks like spirits in a golden silence.

So you can imagine how difficult and painful it was for them when all of a sudden they’d be swamped by violent emotions, by all the fear and anger and hatred generated in one of the vicious fights that could so easily explode between primitive humans. What made these unpleasant events so unpredictable was that they could be occurring anywhere within about a five-hundred-mile radius from where they were camped, the effective range of their telepathic acuity. Because the staff was unwilling to close down this essential sensitivity, they had no choice but to learn how to deal with these crippling emotional tsunamis.

Fortunately, the painful eruptions grew less frequent as the years passed and the sphere of the staff’s stabilizing influence broadened to include more of the nomadic tribes that traveled through the peninsula. There were many good times, too. When various members of the staff were able to take time off from their busy building schedule, they enjoyed taking flights in the small antigravity discs they were permitted to build. Capable of moving under the oceans with the same facility as they skimmed through the air, these were the vehicles the staff used to explore and map their world. The flying discs were an invaluable asset for the staff ’s mission and remained so until the

rebellion, more than 250,000 years later, when everything changed. In the conflicts flaring up between the warring factions of the staff, the flying discs were all destroyed, only remaining as a myth recorded in some of your most ancient documents.

However, these were early days, and their mission statement made it clear that they were to have as little unplanned contact with the indigenous tribes as possible. For example, after observing the terror with which their craft were greeted when they flew too low over one of the human encampments, they thought it wise to stay above the clouds and only make themselves known to humans when absolutely necessary.

As we were all made more than aware back at the premission briefings, the impact of the arrival of a more advanced culture on a primitive world was capable of creating a devastating imprint on that world mind. A bad initial encounter might traumatize the population, reverberating down through the subsequent centuries. Examples of this included planetary populations that remained fearful of an extraterrestrial intervention, even as they themselves were starting to travel to planets within their own solar systems. In some cases, we were told, if the early imprint was particularly damaging, a form of collective paranoia would persist throughout the planetary population’s rise into a global culture.

This failure has now been acknowledged among the Life Carriers as one of the primary causes of the unnatural levels of belligerence and the deep, instinctive distrust of outsiders of any sort we find so often on Earth. Clearly, great care is needed for this sort of operation.

This admonition made the staff extremely cautious in those first years of settling in. The building work was progressing faster than the staff originally thought it would, and although they were aware that their presence was noted by some of the local tribes, they were relieved to see that the passing nomads were changing their route to avoid them.

The staff knew that they would have to interact more fully with the locals sooner or later, but it was not something to which they looked forward with much enthusiasm. Theirs was becoming an easygoing life in the pleasant heat of the Gulf region. The abundant natural wonders were starting to cast their seductive spell over the superhuman visitors—the richness of the vegetation and the endless stands of old-growth trees alive with birds of every color and

hue, the sweetness of the air and the delicious scents that the breezes wafted through the open windows of their small brick houses, all the gustatory pleasures at the discovery of unknown fruits and nuts, and the purely sensual delights of this primitive and, as yet, uncontaminated world.

I say *superhuman* because to normal human eyes the Prince's staff might well be viewed as gods. The bodies that were biologically constructed for them were essentially immortal as long as they continued to eat their mysterious herb, and would have continued unchanging, save for the Lucifer Rebellion, over endless generations of human lives. The knowledge they carried over from their previous mortal lives on a variety of planets within your System, although of little use in this undeveloped world, would have confused and impressed the indigenous natives and contributed even more to the staff being considered divine.

This led to their being highly circumspect in attempting to usher in any new technology to the humans. Even the bricks, which they introduced as a building material and were using in the construction of their own houses and the high wall surrounding their encampment, were initially thought to be made by magic by the few natives courageous enough to approach the impenetrable barricade. Although the staff built the formidable wall mainly to keep predatory wild animals from wandering into their camp, I could see from my covert forays among the surrounding tribes that the wall was merely exacerbating the sense of mystery surrounding the staff 's presence there.

Yet for all the strangeness of their situation and the demands facing them in attempting to raise the collective consciousness of a fearful and belligerent people, the staff settled into their new life with relative ease. Councils were drawn up covering the various areas of human endeavor and the improvements the staff were intending to gradually introduce to the human tribes.

Although the indigenous natives from whom the staff 's bodies were cloned were fine specimens of humanity—fifty men and fifty women gifted with superb physiques and bright, curious intelligences—their troubling levels of fear at the sight of anything beyond their immediate understanding seemed almost impossible for them to master, even with the advanced psychotherapeutic techniques the staff had brought with them. As a consequence, the staff took extra time while the building work was

proceeding to focus their energies on deepening their relationships with these simple, fearful humans—creatures who reminded them so poignantly of themselves when they were mortal beings on their own planets of origin.

In many ways there was an endearing innocence about the members of the Prince's staff. If there was a tendency toward indolence among some of them, on the whole they were gentle and loving beings, interested in the tasks ahead, and proud to have been chosen from among the many thousands of enthusiastic volunteers for a mission no one in attendance had any idea would end in tragedy.

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When he arrived for his first hour with the E-meter, Mein Host was surprised to find that Robert and Mary Ann must have decided between them that she would be conducting the sessions.

"Since Robert and you were such good friends we thought . . ." Mary Ann let the statement drift off into a questioning look, her well-tended eyebrows arching with amusement. Mein Host mumbled his assent, although I caught a flash of admiration briefly coloring his emotional body. I knew there was a part of him that welcomed the switch: Mary Ann was going to be a considerably more rigorous therapist than his old friend.

The session turned out to be far more interesting than Mein Host had anticipated. Holding in each hand what appeared to be soup cans, stripped of their labels and attached by wires to a small box set at a viewing angle in front of Mary Ann, he answered the list of questions with growing ease. Peering over Mary Ann's shoulder, I could observe the needle on the simple device flickering with different degrees of intensity at his various responses. She would then make a note in her rounded, childlike handwriting of the response that produced the largest fluctuation on the meter.

Emphasizing that he should keep the answers short and simply say the first thing that popped into his mind, Mary Ann started focusing on one particular question at a time.

"What is your goal in life?" she asked in a flat voice she clearly hoped would contain no judgment as to her own preferences.

"To be a great architect," he replied after a few moments of obvious struggle. I watched as Mary Ann wrote this down on her pad after noting

minimal needle movement on the meter.

“What is your goal in life?” she asked again, and when Mein Host looked puzzled, she explained that she was going to be asking the same question until she established which of his replies produced the maximum charge on the E-meter.

“The more spontaneous, the better, since those answers will come from a deeper source. Sometimes they’ll even surprise you.”

The first few answers came relatively easily before he appeared to dry up, wriggling awkwardly in his chair. The needle was fluctuating wildly as he inadvertently clutched the cans, making any reaction from the needle unreliable. Mary Ann reminded him to breathe deeply and relax.

“Just hold the cans normally. Don’t squeeze them, all right? Simply let the answers rise to the surface. You’ll get the hang of it.”

At that point his replies did start to flow, with the repeated questions and the answers, each cutting a little deeper into his unconscious mind, achieving a certain natural rhythm.

“What is your goal in life?”

“To be happy.”

“What is your goal in life?”

“To make a difference in the world.”

“What is your goal in life?”

“To be rich and famous.”

“What is your goal in life?”

“To be self-sufficient.”

“What is your goal in life?”

“To leave the planet.”

“What is your goal in life?”

“To know who I am.”

“What is your goal in life?”

“To be subversive.”

“What is your goal in life?”

“To get over my anger.”

And so it went, on and on. Some replies were clearly irrelevant and others were unexpectedly intriguing. After forty different answers to the same question, Mary Ann brought that part of the session to a close, telling an exhausted Mein Host that his replies were no longer producing any movement from the needle.

“This means that somewhere in our list of forty answers is the concept that has the most enduring emotional charge on it. To find this I’m going to read through all your replies and have you repeat them after me. I’ll watch the meter and delete them until we have the last remaining concept—the one that keeps the needle moving when all the other items don’t register. To Mein Host’s evident astonishment, this turned out to be the goal of self-sufficiency.

This did not seem like something to which he’d given much thought in the course of his life, and yet, after being invited to talk about it by Mary Ann, he started to appreciate how the unconscious drive to be self-sufficient might have profoundly affected his understanding of the way the world worked. He found himself remembering, with a stark new clarity, how he felt at Charterhouse when he woke up to the fact that he’d found himself in what he thought of as a concentration camp. He’d known then that he was on his own—utterly alone, with no one to talk to, no one who would understand.

What he wasn’t able to bring to the surface of his consciousness until much later in his life, and which I knew was precipitating this compulsive drive for self-sufficiency, were those moments as a child trapped under the kitchen table, every sense withdrawn in terror, while frantically searching his young mind for what he might have done that made the Nazis want to kill him.

No, that realization was much more deeply buried than Mary Ann’s E-meter was capable of reaching. Yet I could see that something was changed in him—something was opening up, and, in spite of his aversion to Mary Ann, he admitted to himself that she was excellent at drawing out what he didn’t yet know of himself.

“Next week,” she interrupted his reverie to tell him, “if you want to continue with this, we’re going to find out what you believe is preventing you from achieving your goal in life. And then later we’ll explore the consequences of achieving, or not achieving, self-sufficiency and how this would impact on what you truly want to do with your life.

“Now remember,” she continued, “these are compulsions—unconscious

drives that consume psychic energy or, equally, create blockages in your otherwise fluidly flowing energy systems. They're neither good nor bad—they just are. But whether we like it or not, these are the compulsions that control our lives—until we bring them to light." The green eyes were flashing. "Then we can examine the hows and whys of it and end up by releasing the energy trapped within the conflict."

"I was surprised when it came out to be the self-sufficiency thing," Mein Host said, as he put the cans down on the desk and sat back in the chair, looking relieved that the session was over. "There were so many other answers that I thought would be more dominant—like wanting to get rid of my anger or wanting to know who I am."

"Well, that's what we mean by a compulsive drive. It's not necessarily what you truly want to do or be, but for reasons I'm sure we'll find out, it's where you're unconsciously driving yourself. And because part of you is very social—Robert tells me how much you both enjoyed working on your architectural projects together—" Mein Host could not fail to catch Mary Ann's condescension at her reference to the shared architectural projects. She concluded, "What compulsions do is they set up an inner conflict, with parts of you going in different directions."

Mein Host appeared puzzled at that.

"You see," she went on, "these compulsions are simply unconscious conflicts. There'll be a part of you pushing for self-sufficiency and another part, just as vigorously, trying to prevent it from happening. We call this the 'intention' and 'counterintention.' All this is going on under the surface of consciousness, so it's like an iceberg. All you can see is the result of that inner conflict appearing on the surface."

"And if I can bring my counterintention to the surface, Mary Ann, you're saying just knowing it consciously is going to dismantle the conflict . . . ?"

Mary Ann finished the thought: "Maybe not overnight, but it is the important first step. What it's really about is being able to see and accept both sides of the conflict. That way you'll be able to see if your unconscious drive for self-sufficiency is actually what you—the real you—wants."

Mein Host was deeply thoughtful as he made his way back to the apartment he now shared with five other young students in Lexham Gardens, in

southwest London. After the constant flow of people and the all-night parties at the old mansion, now knocked down and replaced by a sparkling new hotel, he was enjoying the privacy of his own small room. It was the first time in his adult life he didn't have a girlfriend living with him, and he was clearly relishing being on his own.

Since the breakup with Vicky, he'd had a number of brief love affairs, but none of them were compelling enough to open his heart. Although he was still barely in his twenties—a time when a young man of his generation might be expected to readily fall in love—I could see, with some concern, that he was starting to approach relationships with women in a more controlling, manipulative frame of mind.

Ruth, for example, was a decent young woman a few years older than Mein Host, whose main (and only) appeal was the fact that she had a car and was prepared to teach him how to drive. Sleeping with Ruth, with their evidently joyless lovemaking, must have felt like a reasonable exchange, because as soon as he got his own driver's license he dropped Ruth and started an affair with her younger and more attractive flatmate, Penny.

What I found most difficult to watch was the ease with which he was able to dismiss Ruth, without a moment's concern for her feelings. While Ruth was not unaware of the young man's agenda, she'd allowed herself to get more romantically involved than she'd wanted. Mein Host, who coldly made the point that he'd never claimed to love her and that her feelings were her responsibility to deal with, abruptly turned his back on her and never saw her again.

After the initial brief attraction to Penny wore off, he didn't treat her any better than he had treated Ruth. But this time it resulted in a situation so mysterious and potentially fatal that even someone as hardhearted as my young ward was becoming was forced to pay attention.

As I've previously mentioned, Mein Host was always an enthusiastic reader. As an only child he discovered the companionship of books early on. He truly loved them, and since he was thirteen he'd started to collect a small library of the books that meant the most to him. As Mary Ann might have pointed out, there was another less fulsome motive—a young man's desire to impress. I noticed this for myself when I watched him walking the streets, to and from college, clutching the book he was currently reading—with the

cover and title patently visible.

Late one afternoon, as a light drizzle was starting on his walk home, he ducked into Bumpus, the well-stocked bookstore on Baker Street. Perusing the psychology and philosophy shelves, he noticed a pretty, dark-haired girl, serving behind the counter. After closing for the day, Jennifer was happy to join Mein Host for a coffee, and over the next few weeks the pair became good friends and then lovers.

I liked Jennifer, and, as with a number of his girlfriends in this period of his life, I felt he treated her far too casually. She was an intelligent girl, the most intelligent he'd yet been with, and also the most passionate. Like Mein Host, she possessed a rebellious streak—a dangerous mix that prompted the relationship to end abruptly.

Getting to know Jennifer, climbing an ivy-covered wall two floors up to her bedroom in her parents' apartment, and making furtive love before slipping out the window and back home, brought a certain measure of underhanded pleasure. While not in love with the girl, he clearly enjoyed the challenge of sneaking into the bed of the libertine daughter of an Orthordox Jewish household. What he wasn't aware of was gradually slipping back into a mentality I can best describe in the words of an older woman scolding him for some remark some years earlier in his life, as being "too smart by half."

With Jennifer wildly enthusiastic about his nocturnal visits and enjoying the thought of defying her oppressive parents—the romantic daring of their liaison added an illicit frisson to her sexual pleasure—they managed never to get caught and amused each other in their infrequent quiescent moments by confessing all the rebellious things they'd done in their lives.

Authoritarian parents, often devout or merely controlling, provide many of the challenges needed by those of us angels of a rebellious nature who are required to incarnate into mortal bodies. A human incarnation can be understood as a punishment or an elevation—perhaps some of both. Our need to strengthen our emotional bodies when we take a mortal vehicle frequently requires a harsh childhood, as the gift of a human body allows us the profound privilege of being indwelt by the Divine Spirit.

Although Mein Host was completely unaware of it at the time, and is only now learning of it as I write, Jennifer was one of the first of the incarnate "fallen angels" he'd yet encountered. What I could feel stirring in him was

the unusual pleasure of two people sharing their secrets, of finding a depth of mutuality neither could fully understand nor had ever previously experienced.

In one of those moments of confession, whispering to each other under the blankets, he confided that he'd occasionally stolen a book. She knew how much he loved books, so amid much giggling and with all the glee of a disgruntled, and notoriously poorly paid employee, she greeted this with an open invitation to take books from the store where she worked. The offer was evidently too tempting to resist, because two or three evenings a week Mein Host would slip out the back while Jennifer was closing up, a shopping bag full of the hardcover books he had coveted for so long.

I should add, in the spirit of fairness, that throughout his affair with bookstore Jennifer, he was living with Penny, another young woman whom you'll recall was the housemate of the recently discarded Ruth, driver's license now obtained.

Unlike Jennifer's explosive passion, her dark beauty, and rebellious nature, Penny was cool and detached. A serious professional modern dancer, Penny was tall with a long, lithe body; a long, graceful neck; and thick, naturally auburn hair. Her freckled, lively face and crinkly eyes were neatly divided by a long, aquiline nose. No classical beauty by any means, yet strikingly attractive, Penny was a kind and carefree soul with a delightful sense of humor who was a great deal more attached to Mein Host than she cared to admit.

As his library steadily grew in the apartment the couple had moved to and shared with a few other friends in a large building on Sussex Gardens, Penny showed little interest in where all those elegant volumes were coming from. Mein Host, in his now typically hardhearted way, said nothing to her about Jennifer, lying consistently to Penny whenever his liaison with Jennifer was in danger of being discovered. Until came the fateful day in which there was no choice but to confess.

He'd learned to drive and bought his first car by now, a very used but quite serviceable CitroÃ«n Deux Chevaux, and he was anxious to impress Jennifer with his worldliness. Setting out one sunny spring morning on Jennifer's day off work, they traveled through the English countryside, heading for the seaside. Some readers might recall the Deux Chevaux, generally thought of as the French equivalent of Germany's original Volkswagen Beetle, as a

laughable-looking car. Like a small corrugated tin hut on wheels, it was the most utilitarian of vehicles, and due to its two-horsepower engine, the “two steam horses,” it was incapable of great speed. The two front windows had a feature peculiar to a few cars of that era: each window was divided horizontally in half, with the top section fixed and the bottom half, some ten inches in height, hinged on the horizontal dividing bar so it flapped up and down in the wind.

I’m watching the little car puttering along the narrow English lanes: the sun is streaming in and the side half-windows are flapping in the wind. The countryside is hilly and thinly wooded with farmhouses set back from the road on unpaved tracks that meander through fields freckled with cows.

The young couple are talking and laughing, congratulating themselves on having stolen this clandestine time together as they crest a modest hill and start accelerating down the other side. Halfway down they both notice a station wagon pulling to a halt at the crossing at the bottom of the hill. A farmer’s wife, perhaps, unused to traffic on that country road and (because I am permitted to know these things) somewhat nearsighted, evidently misjudging both the speed and distance of the oncoming car, starts jerkily to accelerate across the road.

The little Deux Chevaux and the horrified young couple, now rattling down the hill at 57 mph, face an almost impossible choice. It is far too late to slam on the brakes. There is no chance of getting behind the other car, because the driver appears to realize her error at the last moment and jerks backward before trying to move forward again. Mein Host makes an instantaneous decision and jams his foot on the accelerator in hopes that he can slide through in front of the slow-moving station wagon.

They are traveling fast now, and they nearly make it. They flash in front of the terrified driver, her mouth wide open in a scream. But her car does clip the rear bumper of the Deux Chevaux, sending it spiraling over and over, smashing the roof flatter and flatter with each impact and rolling down a steep embankment before coming to rest upside down in a field, a crumpled mess.

I am able to see what would astonish mortal eyes. As the car starts to careen into its series of rolls, two distinctly humanoid forms suddenly manifest on either side of the speeding car, and as though it’s happening in

slow motion, they nonchalantly pluck Jennifer and Mein Host's bodies through the wildly flapping side windows before depositing them gently in the long grass of the field on either side of the flattened wreck of the car.

Both of the young people are rendered unconscious while this angelic piece of sleight of hand is taking place. Mein Host is the first to wake up to the scent of crushed grass and the sound of wheels still turning in the air. The noise is reassuring, reminding him that he is alive. I can see him carefully testing his limbs before hauling himself over to where Jennifer lies prone, still unconscious. Another sound fills his head, swamping the gradually slowing rhythm of the turning wheels, and yet somehow oddly in tune with their muted whine. The woman driver is now out of her car and standing on the edge of the embankment, looking down at the inert bodies and smashed car. She is screaming hysterically.

Jennifer awoke with a headache but was otherwise perfectly unharmed. She left to be checked out for a concussion at the local hospital in an ambulance that arrived at the crash site with astonishing speed—another piece of angelic coordination, by the way.

Mein Host was offered a lift to the hospital by a man who stopped to see if he could help. After they had driven a few miles, the man brought the car to a halt, insisting that Mein Host take the wheel and drive the rest of the way. While the young man steered the car cautiously back along the same lanes he'd previously felt so carefree driving with Jennifer, the man explained to him that by getting back in the driver's seat right after the accident he would lose any terror he might have experienced during the crash.

The "man" who so wisely made him drive back to the hospital was, in fact, a midway angel, like the pair who so fluidly rescued the couple, all of whom were instructed to manifest for just that purpose.

Mein Host would have been dumbfounded to know just how much angelic teamwork had gone into making sure the accident was not fatal. I know from my long experience with midwayers that it requires a great deal of effort—and some complex coordination involving other midwayers who stay within their dimension—for them to manifest in your consensus reality. I've also heard it said that it's extremely uncomfortable for them to do this—that the density of human emotions can wreak havoc with their somewhat more subtle emotional bodies.

Whatever Mein Host's destiny was to be—and no angel is privy to this, because free will plays such a large part in human life—he was clearly not going to shuffle off his mortal coil quite so easily!

* * *

The Urantia Book maintains that midwayers, or midway creatures as they are generally known on most inhabited planets, draw their existence, as their name suggests, midway between the angelic dimensions and those inhabited by human beings.

Although humans are largely unaware of these entities, midwayers may be considered the more permanent planetary citizens, because many of them have been here since they were created almost half a million years ago. And because they remain undetectable to human senses, they function like angelic shock troops, available for interacting with human reality when absolutely necessary. Midwayers have perennially been confused with nature spirits, household gods in some cultures, intraterrestrials or aliens in other societies, and ghosts in almost all cultures throughout history.

They are none of these things, but prefer to keep their presence a mystery so humans won't make gods of them, or blame them for humanity's woes—as they once did. You'll hear much more about these midwayers as my narrative continues.

Recently Mein Host prefers to call them "Beings of the Violet Flame" (the BVF) after catching a rare glimpse of a small group of these beings at dusk on a beach in Israel. This was many years later, in the early 1980s, when he chose to live in Israel while writing his first book. By then he knew a little more about the midwayers although he never anticipated ever seeing them. So, for him, that brief glimpse became an unexpected confirmation.

Here is how it occurred. Mein Host was walking alone at dusk on a deserted beach a few miles from the seaside town of Netanya. Resting on a rock and gazing into the surf he said he suddenly became aware that water droplets in the spray, when caught at exactly the right angle by the setting sun, appeared momentarily to open a violet window into this other realm. Mein Host, by this time in his life somewhat more aware of the angelic realities, took what he saw in his stride. What he saw through this violet window was a small group of tall beings plodding up a small incline. It was

brief but quite clear, and what convinced him it wasn't merely an hallucination was that the vision maintained its coherence when replaced by a new curtain of spray. This continued for as long as ten seconds. He was wise enough by then not to give his astonishment too much credence, nor was he tempted to dismiss it merely as a trick of the light.

Some months before this experience, the researcher Len Pope had suggested that these midway creatures may live within the ultraviolet range of the electromagnetic spectrum. "This would account for their invisibility to human eyes," Len told Mein Host and a small group gathered in Toronto some months earlier than his time in Israel; "since the higher UV frequencies are damaging to the human organism. If this is so, it also makes it easier to understand how midwayers are able to appear and function for a short time within the human frequencies, and then disappear again, just as mysteriously."

So, where are these midwayers, a reader might well ask, and why aren't we more aware of them?

Were you living in another era—in Hatshepsut's Egypt of the eighteenth dynasty, or Greece of the sixth century before Christ, or perhaps in Sumer in the fourth millennium BCE, or in any of those early cultures—you would be more than aware of the midwayers. For reasons that will become apparent as I tell my story, the situation has become very different over the past two thousand years.

The last time that certain midwayers chose to reveal themselves to the human races was in the ancient pantheons of the gods and goddesses. They are largely dismissed now as a product of primitive superstition, or merely the mythic projections of the human imagination.

While it is not my place to criticize those midwayers who became such dominating presences in the ancient world, it was evident to all who watched the antics of those counterfeit deities—with their boastful quarrels, their pride and their vengeance, and all the frightening demands they made on their terrified mortal flocks—that they did not have the best interests of the human race in mind. In their constant feuding with one another, they thought nothing of sacrificing countless lives to achieve their dubious ends.

This was a perilous time for the human species, and it could be said that it was largely due to the often unstable, or downright demented, behavior of the

rebel midwayers that life in this world became so arduous and challenging. Although there were a few midwayers not seduced into independent and unmediated action, and who remained loyal to Local Universe Administration, they were scarcely able to counter the egregious behavior of the rebels.

This, however, is not the situation we have today. After the timely removal of the rebel midwayers a little more than two thousand years ago, this world was thankfully deprived of the increasingly unpleasant presence of this group of beings. The few thousand who remained have struggled through the centuries to undo much of the work of the rebels and to keep the reality of a loving God alive in the hearts and minds of human beings.

This group of loyalists, I might add, petitioned for, and then compiled and transmitted, the 196 papers that became *The Urantia Book.* It was their contention that with the coming of European enlightenment in the seventeenth century, most of the superstitions inculcated by the rebel midwayers were being dispelled. They believed that future generations of humanity deserved, indeed desperately needed, accurate and credible information on what was known about the Multiverse.

When the book was finally completed in the 1930s, the angelic communicants, some of whom were the very midwayers who requested the transmission of the papers in the first place, made it clear that much of the information contained therein was intended for an era beyond this one. The few people who are fortunate enough to stumble on this arcane volume, and who have taken it seriously enough to comb through its dense 2,097 pages, are frequently reincarnates, or those *The Urantia Book* calls “reservists”—men and women who, through their own spiritual heritage and training are able to discern the truth in the words of the book.

So where did these midway creatures come from?

Many of the angels supporting the Prince’s staff in those early years, while the small settlement was turning in to a town, commented on the curious behavior of some of the staff. We who were watching pondered long as to whether there was something in the atmosphere of the planet that encouraged a sensuous, somewhat erotic tone in the manner in which the male and female members of the staff were starting to treat one another.

We all knew the briefings the staff received prior to our arrival on the planet had emphasized the importance of avoiding any close liaisons until they were firmly established. In short, they were told not to procreate until they were advised to do so by their superiors. But these were beautiful creatures, skillfully molded by the surgeons to be graceful and alluring. Their bodies would have been designed for virtual immortality by beings who were considerate of the fact that the staff was going to have to live and work together for at least half-a-million years, so they really needed to be aesthetically pleasing.

Those of the Prince's staff were larger than their clone donors, the fifty males between seven and nine feet tall, with the females only slightly smaller. They were all superbly built, their lean, muscular bodies appearing to us angels to be surrounded by a shimmering lavender-colored aura, although I'm told this wasn't visible to the natives.

Because the staff's bodies were grown from bioplasm taken from a variety of the different indigenous races, albeit much enhanced by the sophisticated bioacoustic technology of the surgeons, the appearance of each of the staff differed, sometimes radically, from individual to individual.

Originally the surgeons attempted to create a balance of males and females from the same human races. But this wasn't always possible. Consequently, when the cloning process was complete and the bodies that the staff were to indwell were grown to their full size, there was great amusement, a lot of mutual admiration, and some surprises when the staff were finally able to look at themselves—from the inside! Having known and spent time with each other in the training simulations before arriving on this planet, they had grown accustomed to how they appeared to one another under "normal" conditions. To find themselves in these magnificent vehicles, so different from their own and so finely tuned by the surgeons for extreme sensual sensitivity, ignited long-forgotten feelings and desires.

So it was hardly surprising that these beautiful beings were unable to follow the admonition of their superiors against sexual contact. Later they would deny that what occurred was indeed sexual and insisted they were following their instructions to the letter. And, although it's the way of us angels to avert our eyes when our mortal wards make love to one another, we were all in agreement as to the essential truth of this. Besides plenty of loving

embraces, some of the staff paired off to sleep with one another, cuddling in each other's arms. It was also seen as perfectly natural for the staff to explore together all the many aspects of their spectacular new vehicles.

Recall, too, that these privileged one hundred were relative novices in the ways of the Multiverse. They were mortals on the planets of their birth, before dying and passing through the six subsequent levels (or, you could call them, lifetimes) to be finally chosen from among the volunteers for what was then generally thought to be a perfectly normal mission—a mission that occurs at some point on every inhabited world in the Local Universe.

The staff was instructed about the midwayers, of course, back in the training sessions, because midwayers were regarded as invaluable aids to any major planetary intervention. They were told that these midway angels would be the result of a certain form of spiritual union between them and that was why the timing of this event was regarded as so important. They must have been aware of the stipulation to delay these unions until instructed, because it had been repeated a number of times with some considerable emphasis by their trainers.

Yet in the excitement of their arrival in this beautiful young world, the staff, now resplendent in their new physical vehicles, appeared collectively to have forgotten one important detail of what they were told about their potential progeny—that they had to be extremely cautious of how intimately they related to one another. For a very good reason, the staff was directed not to start co-creating their midwayer offspring until they had fully stabilized their own emotional bodies.

In the staff's defense, this decree of abstinence was delivered by beings who may never have been faced with such sensual beauty, or ever experienced the depth of passionate feelings of which the staff 's new bodies now appeared capable. For all their noble intentions and their desire to follow their instructions, from what I observed, most of the staff found themselves swept away by the intensity of their emotions.

I had the unusual privilege of witnessing the very first of these bizarre unions. It occurred between a male and female within one of the small subgroups into which the staff was divided—one of the pairs who'd chosen to spend the night together. They were immediately attracted to each other and worked well together in their designated task of learning about the local

wild animals—deciding which were dangerous and which could be domesticated.

Because angels are permitted to observe, and sometimes even appear in what you might call Dreamtime reality, I was able to witness the psychic bonding that produced the first of their midway offspring.

To begin with, the pair had no idea exactly what they'd created while they were asleep. They barely remembered what had happened after they awoke and quickly forgot about it, much as you might overlook a dream.

However, they realized that this had been no dream when, some days later, the apparently spontaneous manifestation of the first of the midway angels appeared in the kitchen of the small house shared by the surprised progenitors. Rather than manifesting as an infant, though, the offspring of the pair was a fully formed humanoid being, visible to all the staff but, as would become obvious over time, invisible to human eyes.

If this seems odd to the reader, I would ask you to consider us angels. We have no true childhood, either, being created in large groups, fully formed, for our specific functions. Because midwayers are closer in certain ways to angels than to humans, they also have no need for those early years of struggle. And because the midwayers' primary existence is based in a slightly higher frequency than humans, the telepathic bonding they experience gives them access to all they need to know at any given point.

The amorous pair then had to admit to each other that they'd stumbled inadvertently onto the very creative mechanism they were so strongly advised to avoid back at the briefings. There was some guilty recrimination, each blaming the other for what happened—even if neither of them knew exactly how it had occurred.

This sad situation was only relieved when the Prince realized that to deter the inevitable envy there was little he could do but give permission for the other ninety-eight to follow in this pair's footsteps. Over time, when the technique was perfected and the rest of the staff was paired off, many thousands of these midway creatures were created. The midwayers' main function—the very reason for their being there—became obvious as the staff came to interact more and more with the local natives. Because the midwayers could move freely around the world, unobserved by human tribes and clans, the staff gained an intelligence-gathering capacity that any modern

espionage agency would covet.

As far as anyone could have known in those early days, the midway beings, living their deathless lives would be the staff's constant companions far into the future. Both staff and midwayers knew they were due to live and work in this world for many thousands of years while they prepared the way for the next major intervention, assumed by everybody to occur about 450,000 years later.

In light of these immensely long spans of time, the premature arrival of the midwayers didn't seem to be overwhelmingly important. The Prince was later to tell his staff that he had made the decision to permit the creation of the full complement of midwayers after the initial accident, without discussing it or even electing to tell his superiors about the unfortunate event. The Prince was a singularly proud presence.

Yet, as I look back, knowing now what was going to happen as the millennia unfolded, as seemingly insignificant as that incident might have seemed at the time, I believe it was the first indication of what was to go so terribly awry.

* * *

If anyone might have proposed such an absurd possibility, Mein Host would have rejected out of hand any suggestion that angels might have saved their lives, pulling Jennifer and him through those improbably small windows. Even today, when he is well aware of how profoundly his life has been touched by angels, I can feel his astonishment at learning that the man who drove him to the hospital after the accident was also a midway angel manifesting in human form for just that purpose.

But at that point in his early twenties, Mein Host was an extremely hardheaded young man who tended to believe only what he could directly perceive with his senses. The country was still recovering from the devastation of the war. In this disbelieving, pessimistic time, like many of his contemporaries, what he couldn't explain he simply pushed to the back of his mind. As a result, he didn't dwell much on their miraculous escape from death or serious injury. No, it was too soon for that.

Yet when he got home and was confessing to Penny about his affair with Jennifer and the awful car crash, his heart opened enough for him to grasp

how deeply he'd hurt both girls. Now he'd been both the betrayed—in being jilted by Vicky—and the betrayer, and he made up his mind not to create, or find himself in, this situation ever again.

The pain and guilt he felt rippled through his emotional body, making it extremely unpleasant to be anywhere near his subtle energy field for a while. Yet I knew how important it was for him to fully experience all the harrowing emotions the betrayal brought up. Much of what he had so harshly repressed when Vicky left him for his closest friend also came to the surface, along with all the more immediate emotions of guilt and shame.

For the first time in his life he was being confronted with the unavoidable reality that he had created this deplorable situation all by himself. There were no bombs dropping, no bullying senior boys, no abusive uncles, no authoritarian schoolmasters, no critical tutors—no one else to hold responsible but his own shameful self.

He was now starting to realize that the duplicity that had worked so well for him at boarding school simply wasn't fair when practiced in adult life. At school he was able to justify his duplicity by telling himself it was either him or the system. Besides, nobody else was getting hurt as a result of his lies. This was different. He could feel Penny's pain, along with his own. He saw how deeply the breach of trust was hurting the girl, who was obviously more in love with him than she'd previously admitted, even to herself.

After the tears and anger subsided, Penny and Mein Host settled into an uneasy truce. Although the relationship never fully recovered from the betrayal, Penny made a valiant attempt to smooth over the damage, and they continued to live together in the apartment they shared with the three others. It was an unwise decision, which appeared to be based more on mutual usage and inertia than love: Penny's insecure need for a man in her bed and Mein Host's somewhat cynical reluctance to uproot and change his life.

In spite of his resolution not to hurt or betray Penny again, there was something in her subservient docility that seemed to bring out the worst in him. He engaged in a brief but unsuccessful fling with Penny's cousin, a beautiful young model who evidently had her own reasons I wasn't privy to for having sex with her cousin's boyfriend. Although this peccadillo was never discovered, I can only think it was Penny's willful blindness that prevented her from noticing a far more painful affair that was happening right

under her nose.

Barbara was Penny's young hairdresser who came to the apartment regularly twice a month to cut and style her hair. Just turning fifteen years old, Barbara was already skilled at her craft and remarkably mature for her age. She was also an exquisite little creature, and if I were to look through Mein Host's eyes he might describe her as a young Audrey Hepburn—slim and long-legged with an admirably proportioned body, a long neck, and a pert, elfin face.

Soon Barbara was cutting his hair as well on her visits. Perhaps it was inevitable, given all the emotional dynamics, that Mein Host ended up seducing the girl. He evidently found her physically irresistible, and she, in turn, seemed to enjoy the secrecy and the illicit nature of the liaison. Meeting as often as they could, considering their busy lives and the necessities of deception, the affair continued behind Penny's back for six months before ending, without her ever finding out.

Mein Host had other short and unremarkable affairs with a wide assortment of women. Well into the 1960s by now, the sexual revolution was under way; seemingly overnight, girls were signaling their sexual availability and speaking openly about their needs and desires. It was a time for experience and not for love. Without being profligate in his sexual partners, Mein Host was exploring and exercising his secondchakra desires in a way his longer relationships—first with Vicky and then with Penny—had never permitted him.

But this, too, had its dangers. In the final years of his seven-year architecture course, Mein Host was starting to take for granted that the hard carapace he'd unknowingly built around his heart was, in fact, him. His fundamentally skeptical, materialistic belief system, in spite of brief glimpses of the transcendent reality with entheogens, didn't allow for anything other than the human ego. "There is the ego," he would say, "and under certain altered states of consciousness, there is ego-loss." Like students of Buddhism and their talk of "the Void," he was unable to penetrate any further into the Mystery.

Other forces were at work behind the scenes in Mein Host's life, however, which would soon precipitate an entirely new and unanticipated direction in his life.

I've mentioned the human chakra system before, because it is through his throat chakra that I was originally able to make myself known to Mein Host.

Because the well-being of chakras is part of many Asian medical practices, and is still held suspect in Western medicine, let me explain something of what they represent to angels.

In the past colleagues of mine were able to communicate elements of the chakra system through mystics in India and China. Here, they largely placed the emphasis on the health aspects, showing how the shape and color of the relevant chakra—which can be seen by an intuitively gifted human—reflect a person's health. Of the seven main chakras, the bottom three relate to physical health, while the top three focus on spiritual health. That much is well known.

Less well known, perhaps, is the way the chakras connect the subtle energy bodies with the physical vehicle. A disease, which will ultimately manifest in the physical body, generally starts in one of the subtle energy vehicles. A lack of faith, for example, will likely first manifest in the spiritual body. If a person is unaware of this, the lack of faith will descend into the mental body as some form of egotism and intellectual self-importance. If that person doesn't understand and release the issue at that point, the lack of faith will then descend into the emotional body and be experienced as a constant state of tension and a feeling of insecurity. Once again, the person has an opportunity to recognize and deal with it at an emotional level—at this point they might consult a psychotherapist. If they don't, it will descend into the physical body and manifest as an organic disease.

There is another function of the human chakra system, however, that is far less well known. The chakras are also the prime access points to the other forms of intelligence present in the Multiverse.

The base chakra accesses the mineral intelligences, the long, slow rhythms of the Rock Devas. The second chakra allows entry to the floral intelligences, to the Nature Spirits. The third gives access to the animal consciousness, to the power animals of the shaman. The fourth chakra, the heart center, is the link between the lower and higher chakras and is the spiritual destination of the human journey. The fifth chakra permits contact with the realm of the

angels within the Local Universe. The sixth chakra can access the archangelic circuits and the larger context of the Multiverse. The seventh, the crown chakra, enables direct contact with the Divine.

While angels do not gain entry to a human being's mind unless we are specifically invited in, we are able to observe the state of a human's chakras and thus know a great deal about that person's psychic and physical health.

Because I was aware of Mein Host's history—the father who he subconsciously felt had abandoned him and the fear he absorbed as a child during the war—it was hardly surprising that his chakras were in a highly unbalanced state. The ideal is to find each chakra, which we perceive as spinning colored discs, as unblemished and rotating evenly along a vertical axis.

One of my hidden functions in his life is to influence certain situations in such a way as to challenge Mein Host to find security in his faith, rather than in the ways of humankind. Also, my subtle coordination, in part, made possible some of the sexual encounters he required to activate his second chakra.

I raise the issue of the chakra system somewhat earlier in this tale than Mein Host had any knowledge of it because, as I explore his life, I find it a convenient and accurate way of understanding the deeper dynamics of his human life.

The chakra system is still practiced by some of the ancient Eastern religions, as well as by shamans from different cultures the world over. As one of the gifts of the Prince's staff to the humans they trained in the arts of spiritual and emotional health, it remains one of the few offerings still of value from an off-planet intervention occurring half a million years ago. This is a tribute to the system's value as a diagnostic tool and an experiential reality. The chakra system also stands as common ground between angels and humans and is fundamental to understanding how we might better know one another.

7

A Glimpse of an Extraterrestrial

The City of Dalamatia, a Young Girl's Discovery, Thermonuclear Anxiety, and the Nature of Fandor Telepathy

Although the Prince's staff had obeyed their instructions to remain strictly celibate and not to procreate sexually until many tens of thousands of years had passed, it hadn't been long before many of them paired off. The reason offered for this procreative prohibition made perfect sense to them at the briefing: if they were to have physical children with material bodies over the half a million years their intervention was planned to take, their progeny would end up far more numerous than the native population. And that wasn't the point at all.

But they were lonely. They may have been superhuman by purely human standards, their superb physical bodies continuing in perfect health as the centuries passed, but it was impossible to deny that there were only a hundred of them. Fifty only, if they were looking for sensual companionship, which was a very small pool of potential partners.

After the unintentional and premature appearance of the first midway angel co-created by one of these unions, and the Prince's blessing to the rest of his staff to follow in the couple's footsteps, the yearning for real physical offspring was allayed for a while.

Because the midway birthing process occurred on the subtle energy level, without any of the physical discomfort or the long gestation period associated with human birth, in a remarkably short time many hundreds of midwayers were being co-created. While these strange creatures were technically the staff's offspring, they could never be described as children.

All of us were fascinated getting to know and understand the individual midwayers as they appeared. Similar to us angels, they were created as functional beings, yet with far more personal autonomy than the higher

angels. While the midwayers had little choice but to subscribe to the general plan for uplifting human consciousness and preserving the integrity of the planet, many of them had some radical ways of going about it. This allowed for sufficient variations in knowledge and opinion to keep the discussions that would often continue through the warm tropical night interesting—at least for a while.

Although the staff were informed about the midwayers in their training and preparation programs back on the System's Headquarters Planet, none of them could recall exactly what had been said about how many midwayers to expect. Therefore, it was still something of a surprise when the numbers kept increasing—thousands upon thousands—until a full complement of fifty thousand midwayers was reached and the river dried up.

I know this might sound strange to contemporary ears, but consider that we angels were also conceived and materialized in very large numbers, as, indeed, are many of your lower orders of animal life. In many fish and reptile species, only an extremely small proportion of eggs will come to fruition. In the higher orders of celestial life, when large groups of angels are manifested simultaneously, each act of creation is fully successful. There isn't the profligate waste we see among some animal species in the evolutionary worlds.

So far, so good, we all thought. We'd been on the planet for more than seven thousand years by now, and, with the growing number of midwayer offspring, we felt we were fulfilling our mission with spectacular success. It was still the early days, so I'd like to think we weren't deluding ourselves.

Dalamatia, the city on the Persian Gulf, was now long completed, having been based on the plans the Prince had brought with him. With small adjustments for topography, the city was roughly circular and set among gently swelling hills with their valleys traversed by streams. In some cases the water needed redirecting to maintain the integrity of the high surrounding wall, so a system of waterways and irrigation ditches was dug, which then needed to be maintained in the fields and grasslands surrounding the city.

The city was divided into ten smaller sections, all grouped around a central three-story temple set in its own grounds and surrounded by massive old-growth trees. These beautiful old trees were carefully preserved and incorporated wherever possible into the layout of the city. In the center of a

small courtyard in this Temple of the Unseen Father grew the shrub that was intended to sustain the staff through the many millennia they were expected to be on the planet.

At the center of each of the ten subdivisions was a large, two-story structure housing the administrative offices of the appropriate council, which, in turn, were surrounded by the modest bungalows of the staff and their companions. It wasn't an easy mission—that was clear from the start. The natives' mix of fearfulness and aggression shocked everyone and added to the caution the staff needed while making the bricks required for all the building work. Some of the structural work on the high wall surrounding the city ended up more slipshod than called for in the plans because so many of the staff were needed in the fields and to guard the bricks while they hardened in the sun. After the wall was completed, life became more secure and the dangerous wild animals, accustomed to moving through the city on their hunting forays, no longer forced the staff into a regular sundown curfew.

There was also the premature arrival of the midwayers. While helpful in some ways, this also slowed down progress as the staff struggled to find their emotional equilibrium. The surgeons of Avalon might have created the most excellent physical vehicles, but only by taking over the bodies and living in them could the staff's subtle energy bodies be developed.

If I were to make a more critical observation at these early stages, I would say that the enthusiasm with which the staff started on their long mission was progressively diminished by the continuing distraction created by the addition of so many midwayers. Without having adequately prepared their emotional bodies for the natural frequencies of the planet, the staff were prone to making ill-considered judgments, which then needed to be undone whenever possible. In some cases it wasn't possible, and their foolish decisions resonate down to this day.

Let me tell you about one of these errors that still causes confusion and terror.

To back up for a moment: My passing reference to the Temple of the Unseen Father, placed reverently in the middle of the city, underscores the centrality the Creator played in the staff's lives. So perhaps it's the time to convey what I mean by this Unseen Father who was so important to them.

In all simplicity, the Father aspect of God was spoken about as "Unseen,"

because that characteristic of the Creator had disappeared so far into the Creation as to warrant the term *unseen*. The purpose of this, or so the Melchizedeks teach, is to allow mortals, on whatever planet they may live, to develop sufficient emotional and spiritual stamina to sustain the indwelling of this same Unseen Father.

In those early days of human development, while the Indwelling Spirit was expressed in some of the more advanced mortals, it lay largely dormant and unrecognized in most. The staff's sacred task, as they understood it, was ultimately to uplift and inspire the native population with the faith to develop the necessary spiritual wherewithal to know the Unseen Father through personal experience. That was the hope anyway—to reassure these primitive humans, only too accustomed to a hard and often perilous life, that a God of Love was only a heartbeat away.

As you might imagine, it was no easier to make a case for a God of Love then than it is now! A memo I happened to see from the head of one of the ten councils, optimistically named the College of Revealed Religion, revealed the problem they were having. The note complained about the difficulty of penetrating the fearful nature of the few humans they were able to lure into spending time with them. And these were the special ones. Even with the few successes they claimed, once the natives returned to their clan or tribe, they invariably reverted to their original tribal superstitions.

As the memo suggested, there was one approach the members of the council had been resisting, but they believed it would be more effective—at least in the short term. Members of the college were divided about it, the memo reported—not about the technique's efficacy, but about the morality of it—and were seeking a general consensus.

It would be far simpler, the memo argued, to take the natives' natural fear of ghosts and spirits and the crude ceremonies developed to assuage them, and transfer that to a fear of God. This way, they reasoned, they would be putting the fear to good use.

A fractious debate ensued among the other council leaders, all of whom, I might add, were chosen for their leadership qualities before their arrival on the planet. The head of the Council on the Arts and Science, for example, was passionately opposed to the proposal.

"If we agree to this idea of fearing God," he insisted, "we're going to

regret it later. We're not here to make people afraid of the Creator. They're already terrified enough!"

"We'll never make any headway the way we're going," the revealed religionists argued equally passionately. They were aware that they'd fallen behind the other councils and during the thousands of years they'd been there had only convinced a mere handful of natives to believe in their Unseen Father.

"Redirecting their natural terror to a fear of the God we know to be all-loving might seem radical. Some might even suggest that we're taking the easy way out" (some had!), and more angrily, "Let them come and try! Let them come and talk of love to a man terrified of his own shadow!"

"Listen! This is madness!" another council member retorted. "Don't you see what will happen? If you persuade them that their fear of ghosts is really a fear of God, then they'll blame God for every earthquake, volcano, or hurricane. They'll not only end up fearing God, but they'll be angry with God for every natural disaster that He didn't stop."

So the debate veered back and forth until expedience won the day, with the confident assurance that they could always switch it back at some later time. What they couldn't know, of course, is there wouldn't be a later time.

I'll spare you further arguments for and against, because the consequences of their final decision are so obviously still being used by religious leaders of all stripes to instill guilt and to terrify their followers.

There were other errors of judgment, too, generally as a result of one of the councils attempting to move ahead of the others. One glaring example stood out and was often referred to sardonically when other concepts designed to accelerate the upliftment process were introduced. This occurred after the Council on the Arts and Science had some tentative success introducing methods of working with fire and metals. Great patience was required from the council members, because even the most advanced of the natives appeared to have an unshakable fear of fire.

Two of the staff had returned in their flying discs from one of their mapping trips with several large lumps of meteoric iron, and, because meteorites remain on the surface of the ground and could have been found by any passing nomad, they argued that it would now be appropriate to

demonstrate what could be done with the metal. Mining for iron or copper had already been rejected by the council as moving too fast, so the ready access of the meteorites and the advantage that the iron-nickel alloy in the meterorites needed no smelting made a persuasive argument that the time was right to introduce the concept of metallurgy.

Initial attempts were all failures. Although the natives were fascinated by the meteorites, carefully weighing them in their hands and pretending to throw them at one another, once the fire was stoked to melt the metal, their fear got the better of them. It took several centuries before one of the natives finally overcame his terror of red-hot metal and managed to fashion a crude metal bowl. Sadly, when this particularly courageous man was sent back to his clan, he was promptly killed for sorcery when he tried to demonstrate his new skill.

However, when one person achieves a breakthrough, others soon follow, so within a remarkably short time softer metals like gold were being melted down and poured into clay molds in a number of the surrounding settlements.

Encouraged by these breakthroughs, one faction of the council pushed hard for what they believed was the next logical stage: the development of steam power. They were so insistent that the majority of the council gave their permission for a trial run. Like many of their subsequent attempts, this one did not succeed. In fact, although steam power has appeared intermittently as an energy source in various subsequent civilizations, it wasn't until the eighteenth century in Europe that steam was used to drive an Industrial Revolution that would sweep the world.

"It's just steam—don't you people see? It's only steam? Here, look at it. Steam . . ." and the staff member would soon be shouting at the retreating backs of the few petrified natives curious enough to watch. But it was hopeless. The Council on Arts and Science tried to introduce steam power on three different occasions, producing in each case the same fearful response before recognizing that the explosive power of steam was simply too terrifying to be of any value. Like much else, they put that off, too, until a later time; a time that would never come for them.

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Mein Host successfully completed his architectural course and was now

working in an office in his seventh and final year before receiving his degree. While he had been desperately bored and unhappy slaving over detailed blueprints of drains and windows at his previous job at the large architectural firm, his new office was small, with only four others, including Julian, the owner and chief architect.

The year 1964 was a difficult time for any small architectural firm. There was plenty of construction going on; London was rapidly filling in the bomb craters with new office buildings. But when the contracts weren't going to the large, time-tested firms, the dribs and drabs—small blocks of apartments, shops, houses, and the endless proposals for commercial properties that never went anywhere—were snatched up by an increasing profusion of small firms. A few of these firms were dominated by a single commanding presence with a gift for design and a steady stream of rich clients, like James Stirling, who grew to become the most influential English architect of the latter part of the twentieth century.

The small office in which Mein Host found himself for that final year was most definitely not one of these standouts.

Julian was a tall, thin man in his early forties who walked with the slight stoop of someone who'd spent too many years bent over a drawing board. He was an affable man by nature—perhaps too affable to be a good businessman—and had been running his own practice for about seven years. He had a few young architects working for him when he hired Mein Host, and about half a dozen projects on the drawing board.

To his credit, Julian quickly recognized the young man's artistic flair and gave him the task of creating the perspective drawings, which they used to sell the building design to the client. This was well before the advent of computer-aided design (CAD) systems, with their coldly accurate and sterile representations, and the best way of convincing clients to sign off on a design was to present them with a beautifully rendered and seductive depiction of their building-to-be.

In creating these presentation perspectives, Mein Host found his talent for drawing being appreciated and valued for the first time. The idiosyncratic graphic style he had developed at architectural college as a way of giving his buildings an emotional reality made even the most quotidian of houses look exciting and impressive. Yet, after a few months, creating these elegant

representations of what he knew would turn out to look different in reality became tedious. That they were successful at convincing the clients didn't make him feel much better.

He continued to work in the office for the prescribed year with a steadily decreasing interest in architecture. Now that my ward had moved out of the artificial bubble of college life and into the workplace, I watched as he became progressively more disillusioned with all the conflict and tension involved in getting almost any structure built.

Julian, whose practice had only recently started picking up, was already bending under the pressure by the time Mein Host joined the firm. The man had been set up in business by his wealthy father, also an architect, and for a while clients—mainly friends, under mild pressure from his father—supported the London office. But Julian was not a good businessman: he was quick to anger and frequently rude to clients. Neither was he an exceptional architect—one of the reasons he was so grateful to his new employee for his graphic skills—and sadly, he lived in a barely suppressed terror that his own inadequacy would be exposed.

Sensing something basically kind about Mein Host, he took to inviting his young employee to join him for lunch. After a few glasses of gin, all Julian's troubles would pour out—the fights he had with his clients, one minute blaming them and the next collapsing into tears of self-recrimination, plus the pressure he constantly felt from his architect father. Yet he was honest enough to admit that he was never going to be good enough for the old man.

Mein Host, uninclined to touch strong drink after that one time at Harrods some years earlier when he'd become sickeningly drunk, would watch and listen with as nonjudgmental a fascination as possible, while the poor man blurted out his troubles, with tears sometimes falling into his untouched soup.

I must confess that I was amused to observe that Mein Host never once associated the conflicts and pressures his boss had with those of his own ambitious father. That is, he never put himself in Julian's shoes, thinking of what might have become of himself if his mother had not divorced his architect father when he was so young.

Over the eighteen months he stayed with the firm, he watched the steady decline and self-destruction of both the business and his increasingly alcoholic boss. Yet this sad demise clarified the young man's feelings about a

career in architecture. He knew enough about himself by this time to realize his mercurial personality was completely unsuited to the long attention spans required to shepherd a building from design through completion. He was also starting to realize just what a complex craft architecture was—very different from the grandiose flights of fancy encouraged at college—and how very few architects ever get to design significant buildings until they are in their fifties or sixties, if at all. Remember poor old Alex Armstrong.

In spite of being given the prize job in the office, it became all too clear in the course of his time working as a professional architect that there were better and deeper ways of living his life. After qualifying with his degree in architecture, he would practice briefly in Nassau, in the Bahamas, and after that he never again worked as a professional architect.

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The best the Prince's staff could hope for in those early millennia was to gradually shift the native tribes from their nomadic hunter-gatherer way of life to the way of the herder. This, the staff was told back at their briefing, would demand a new sort of caring for animals, and it would introduce greater social stability due to the predictable seasonal movement of the herds. Over time, and as information on animal husbandry was gradually spread from the city, some of the more adventurous natives learned to further domesticate their herds.

Domestication was a subtle business. Progress needed to occur as naturally as possible. Simple breeding programs proved difficult to initiate, for example, until a native family spontaneously fenced off a small section of grassland and herded some wild cattle into the enclosure. This then required the family to build a dwelling there to care for the cattle, which, in turn, led naturally to small farms as others copied their example.

It also wasn't difficult to teach some of the advanced females they had drawn into the city about seasonal planting, because they grasped the advantages of stability, of home and hearth, far more readily than their menfolk. The women also turned out to be more courageous than the men when it came to handling fire, so from this new manner of living it became a straightforward matter to establish methods of food storage by cooking, drying, and smoking meat.

The staff were encouraged to see that the natives were soon coming up with many of these advances for themselves. Then the information would spread even more rapidly among the tribes who continued to follow their herds, leading more and more of the nomads to settle down to a domesticated lifestyle. Small settlements of humans started emerging, clustered together for safety from wild animals and the occasional band of marauders. The constant fear of famine gradually diminished over the centuries as the natives became more confident in their ability to grow food and preserve it through the tough times.

Gathering together in this way created different social demands from those the tribe faced when they were constantly on the move. The herd was generally regarded as communal property, and the tribes needed to travel light, so personal property held little importance for them. That all started changing as different families congregated in these farming settlements. Then they were all too quick to stake out their land.

Although the natives were still communal by nature, one of the intriguing features I observed in those early farming families was that as they fenced off their properties, it seemed to me they were also fencing off their minds. When a local crisis wasn't forcing them to band together to protect their farms, I noticed a growing element of competitiveness between some of them. With a heritage of tens of thousands of years of nomadic life behind them, in which a tribe lived and traveled as a single, largely undifferentiated, consciousness, these feelings of separateness and individual identity created new and troubling tensions in the tribal unit.

The staff was continuing to use their somewhat limited telepathic abilities to reach and call in those humans sensitive enough to hear the subtle telepathic whispers in their throat chakras. Naturally, the native to whom the telepathic signal was directed was initially terrified by what seemed to be happening to her—which is where we angels were able make ourselves useful. Working through dreams, in this case of a young girl who was open to telepathic contact, it took all our ingenuity to subtly smooth out the way for her to make the long journey to the city.

In the situation I refer to here, the girl in question, I'll call her Onya, was sensitive enough to have received the telepathic call quite clearly. At thirteen years old, Onya was already showing signs of an exceptional intelligence,

and her tribe, one of the more primitive on the Arabian Peninsula, was starting to whisper about her sorcery behind her back. This spelled certain death for the girl, as was the custom of the tribe, and it was just a question of time before they came to sacrifice her.

There was nothing any of us angels could do about this in a practical way, of course. We are required to be unsentimental when we observe the brutal customs of some of the indigenous peoples. In this case, however, the staff wanted to get the girl out before she was killed and gave us permission to intercede in any way we could without showing ourselves or making the situation worse.

There were only two of us working on the case, and, having no midwayers with us on this one, we knew we had no choice but to handle this in Dreamtime. Fortunately the girl was remarkably sensitive and enjoyed lucid dreams, but what convinced us was my colleague's observation that Onya was prone to sleepwalking. This we could use to our advantage.

We needed to be careful not to frighten Onya, because any excessive fear tended to overwhelm her psychic sensitivity. We massaged her dreams for a while, gently guiding her attention to the mysterious city at the other end of the rainbow. When her dreams became lucid and she became more confident at wishing herself wherever she wanted to travel, it was toward the city we'd turn her curiosity. In this way she was able to develop a subconscious awareness of the journey and what was to come, and she was bright enough not to share her dreams with anyone else.

When I overheard a group of the older tribesmen (and they were all men) talking about sacrificing the young sorceress at the next dark of the moon, I knew we had to move fast. The very next night, after the usual carousing ended and sleeping men and boys were sprawled all over the encampment, Onya embarked on the dream that saved her life and changed it forever.

My colleague and I guided her feet as she sleepwalked between the prone bodies and threaded her way through the thorny brush at the edge of the camp. Still fast asleep, we coaxed her farther and farther until she reached a small valley about three miles away. Some days earlier, with the help of a materialized midwayer whom the staff had reluctantly spared us for a single afternoon, we'd prepared a well-hidden bower where Onya could find herself when she awakened. Her body was exhausted at the end of her walk, so she

offered no resistance when we carefully shepherded her along the bank of a stream to the bed of long grass we'd arranged, hidden away under a tree with low-hanging boughs.

I could see what a shock it was when she awoke at sunrise to find herself alone and in a place she didn't recognize. After the initial surprise wore off and she'd splashed her face in the stream to make sure she was awake, she set her face firmly in the direction of the city, picking edible berries off the bushes as she walked. Because she was already subconsciously aware of the easiest route from the dreaming, all we needed to do was redirect the awareness of any large predator in her path. I had to call in my colleague once on the journey to handle a large cat, now long-extinct but then local to the area and in the tiger family, whose hunger swamped my single influence. Together my colleague and I were able to bend the animal's will and reorient him toward a small herd of antelope grazing in the next valley.

With that small crisis averted, and the girl happily unaware of the behind-the-scenes machinations making her trip possible, she came within sight of the high walls of the city at noon on the third day of the journey. A small group of the staff—two females and one male—accompanied by two female humans walked slowly out to greet the solitary girl. All five stopped about a hundred yards away, extending their hands outward in greeting. A combination of Onya's unusual courage, her curiosity, and the reassuring telepathic tendrils that the three staff were projecting at her all contributed to rooting her to the spot.

The two women, only a few years older than the girl and carefully chosen to look like her, approached Onya, making kind and caring sounds in a shared language. Once again I was happy to see the value of the preparatory dreamwork we'd done with Onya, because she easily mastered the instinctive fear so easily provoked by the unknown and appeared immediately at ease with the impressive presence of the three staff.

Once in the city there was a short ceremony of greeting traditionally held in the temple, after which, recognizing the girl's exhaustion, she was shown to a modest one-story dwelling, where she immediately collapsed on a heap of cushions and animal skins in one corner of the room. Excitement and fatigue briefly fought for her young consciousness before she slipped in to a dreamless sleep.

When the morning sun flooded over her face, she awoke with a start, staring around the small room and trying to grasp onto something familiar. Strange and unrecognizable scents wafted in with the breeze, and she could hear the chatter of voices in an unknown tongue passing in front of the house. One particular smell was so enticing she was drawn from her bed to the open window to see on the other side of an open roadway flanked with cottages similar to hers a small conical structure with smoke drifting out of the top. A woman Onya would have recalled as being one of the two who'd met her the day before seemed to be pulling a steaming brown lump out of the fire.

The girl watched for a couple of minutes, the memory of the past few days swimming back into her consciousness, before the smell of baking bread overcame her fear of the fire she could see gleaming in the mouth of the oven. Gathering her courage, she slipped over the windowsill and cautiously followed the smell to where the woman had already piled half a dozen baked pieces of flatbread on a rock behind the oven.

Bread had been made possible some years earlier when certain of the wild grasses growing abundantly in the fertile lowlands surrounding the city had been cultivated to produce a domesticated barley. Onya wouldn't realize until later, when she was required to work in the fields, just what a laborious process it was to pick the barley and remove each hull, one at a time, until her hands were chafed and bleeding. But this was after she'd been living in the city for a while and, like so many of the others, Onya had become mildly addicted to delicious, warm flatbread, straight out of the oven.

The woman watched as Onya, even dirtier than most new arrivals she'd seen, edged carefully around the oven, trying to ignore the glowing red mouth before finally getting to the pile of bread, the source of the smell now filling her head. All this was entirely new to Onya, and she clearly wasn't sure what to do next. Glancing up at the woman, Onya saw that she'd momentarily turned away to feed the fire, and, moving so fast I didn't see her do it, the girl grabbed a piece of bread and was halfway back to her cottage before it seemed to leap from her hands, skittering over the sandy ground.

She was crouched on her knees blowing on her scalded hands. With concern on her face, the woman stopped feeding the fire and went over to comfort her while making motherly cooing noises. With an arm around her slim shoulders the older woman walked Onya back, picking up the bread on

the way and making a show of putting it quickly into the folds of her robe. This drew a quick grin from the girl, which the woman returned with a beaming smile as she ushered the waif back to her room. She made sure the girl was comfortable before hurrying out, then ran back into the room only minutes later with a white paste, which she smeared on Onya's hands.

Sitting cross-legged opposite Onya, the woman solemnly broke the bread, and when the paste had dried on the girl's hands, handed her a still-warm piece. Onya was hesitant to take it after burning her hands, so the older woman gestured toward her own mouth, popping in a piece and munching enthusiastically. Onya cautiously reached for the offering, broke off a small piece, and put it in her mouth. The two females were looking into each other's faces, both copper skinned with long dark hair, before Onya's grubby face broke into a huge smile and she started chewing with the gusto of someone who hadn't eaten for a few days.

Having filled her stomach, Onya let herself be tucked back under the skins, and, secure for the first time in as long as she could recall, she fell into a deep slumber from which she didn't awaken for two days.

When Onya finally opened her eyes, her face lit up as she saw the woman who had befriended her standing in the middle of the room. Clenching and unclenching her hands without feeling any pain, Onya extended them out to the woman with a surprised look on her face. Taking one of the girl's hands in hers the woman sat down next to her on the sleeping mat.

"My name is Watami. You, Onya," she said, with lots of gesturing. "Me, Watami."

The girl was still drowsy with sleep, but she nodded and repeated *Watami* a couple of times quietly to herself while snuggling up to the older woman.

"We need to get you cleaned up," Watami whispered after holding Onya's frail body in her arms: "Tomorrow your new life starts, Onya."

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Mein Host's work as a guinea pig for Mary Ann and Robert's investigations with the E-meter was progressing surprisingly well in their weekly sessions. His dislike of Mary Ann was undiminished but conveniently suppressed when he realized how good she was at working with the machine. In contrast to the somewhat indifferent questioning he'd received at the hands of the

trainee therapists at the Psychotherapy Institute, he felt that he was digging deeply into the well of his subconscious mind at last.

Who was he really? What was his purpose on this odd little planet? What was he here to accomplish? What would be the consequences of succeeding in one venture? In failing in another? How was he preventing himself from accomplishing his mission? The questions were endless and increasingly profound as, between them, they stripped away the many irrelevancies and emotional blockages Mein Host was using subconsciously to limit and confuse himself.

He threw himself wholeheartedly into the inner work with Mary Ann, eagerly telling the friends with whom he was living just how fascinating and helpful his sessions with the E-meter were. Always enthusiastic about his immediate interests, he was soon encouraging his closest friends to try it out for themselves.

This quickly altered the atmosphere in the apartment he was sharing with the others. Doors previously kept shut with the justification that the occupant, or occupants, were hard at work studying, were now left open, with friends wandering freely in and out. There seemed to be so much more to talk about. Long conversations around the kitchen table went on late into the night. Other friends of friends were coming around, drawn by the intensity of interest in this new approach to self-exploration.

If this focus on self-investigation sounds narcissistic to contemporary ears, remember that England in the early 1960s was still struggling to find its own identity in the vastly changed global arena following the Second World War. The generations who survived the ravages of the war had no choice but to throw themselves into dealing with the physical realities of a broken nation. Any national pride garnered from being on the winning side of the war quickly dissipated in light of food rationing, joblessness, and economic hardship.

Young people—those born during or just after the Second World War—soon found they were facing an entirely different world from that of their parents. They’d seen how the older generation had stumbled blindly into two devastating world wars within twenty-five years of each other. Clearly something was profoundly out of balance at the most basic of levels.

It became a time of intense questioning, and not only for Mein Host.

Although he was never driven to join Bertrand Russell's Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, he was sympathetic to its general aims. Yet he also realized that the changes society needed to make went far deeper than simply a collective decision not to use thermonuclear bombs. And even that was unlikely enough!

At this point in human history, it's hard for people to recognize what it meant to live under the constant threat of nuclear incineration. However suicidally intentioned the current terrorist threat might be, the terrorist bombers don't create quite the same pall of powerlessness and despair as all those intercontinental ballistic missiles with their promise of instant annihilation.

Change, if it were possible, Mein Host argued with his friends, needed to start at a personal level if it were to accomplish anything. His activist friends took a different view. They pointed out that while Mein Host was navel gazing, there was nothing to prevent the bombs from falling. He tried telling them about his odd encounter with an extraterrestrial, but they didn't take him seriously.

This is the way it happened. I had arranged through a bit of skillful angelic coordination for Mein Host to bump into one of the extraterrestrials then resident on the planet.

He was walking briskly along London's busy Wigmore Street on his way to his weekly session with Mary Ann when he almost collided with a tall, blond man coming in the other direction. While both men were trying to get by each other, simultaneously sidestepping first one way then the other, the blond man looked him directly in the eye and said very calmly, as though he were reading Mein Host's mind: "Don't ever worry about the rockets. We can pick them out of the air just like that!" and he snapped his fingers in front of my young ward's face before disappearing back into the crowd.

There was a quiet tone to the man's voice. It carried a confidence and knowingness quite unlike anything Mein Host had experienced previously in his life. He was able to hear the truth in the man's statement, and with that came the understanding that the blond man was indeed an extraterrestrial. It happened so fast, and the statement itself was so unexpected, it left him with his mouth open as the man stepped fluidly around him.

Yet for all his skepticism about transcendent realities, he found he had no

doubt about the truth of the extraterrestrial's claim. No doubt at all.

Later, after his session with Mary Ann was over, he told her about his bizarre encounter with the ET. He was surprised to find that she accepted what occurred without even blinking. All she asked was how sure he was that the man was an extraterrestrial.

"It's very strange," he replied, "but I just knew. In fact, I feel more sure of that than about what he said. After I thought it through, of course, I realized if I was so intuitively sure that he was an ET, then he probably could pluck the rockets out of the sky!"

On his way home that afternoon, the young man appeared thoughtful, but I could tell from the state of his emotional body that he was far better balanced, and the blemishes on his base chakra were fast disappearing. It was now becoming a bright, glowing, ruby red.

As a postscript to this odd, but encouraging, encounter, it was only today (as I write in September 2010) when Mein Host was getting his morning dose of FOX News (he says he watches FOX because he gets so angry with their lies it wakes him up even if I tune out when he does that!) that a courageous group of ex-military and air force officers came forward to speak openly about their experiences with UFOs. Their main concern, apparently, was when UFOs appeared over missile silos and disabled their firing mechanisms. This was occurring in both America and the Soviet Union throughout the Cold War, with both sides powerless to do anything about it and—until then—too paranoid and secretive to admit it was happening.

Mein Host points out that these recent revelations are only the tip of a vast, and as-yet-unrevealed, mountain of information on extraterrestrials that the intelligence agencies of the world have been holding back for their own purposes. When all this comes to light, as it must, it will be possible to acknowledge how many times the world has been saved from total war by the friendly intercession of an extraterrestrial "picking a rocket out of the sky . . . just like that!" Snap!

* * *

It was some fifteen thousand years after the mission arrived and the humans in the settlements within the radius of a few hundred miles of the city were growing accustomed to the Prince's staff, although the midwayers still

remained imperceptible. The Prince, of course, as was true for the rest of us angels, also remained invisible and unknown to the native population. In this way the humans, already struggling to cope with all the rapid advancements stimulated by the staff ’s intervention, could focus on matters that really concerned them. The humans would only have been bewildered if midwayers mysteriously appeared and disappeared in their lives, just as knowing that angels were observing them would have inhibited their natural behavior.

Onya, the young adventuress, was drawn from the very limits of the staff ’s telepathic reach, and because her tribe’s migration route only tangentially touched the settlements of those natives familiar with the staff, the tribe had heard merely vague whispers of the strange visitors. And the little they were told made no sense to them with their rigid understanding of their small world.

There was good reason for this. Cautious at being worshipped as gods, the staff had long stressed to all natives drawn to the city that when they returned to their tribes and settlements, they should emphasize that the staff were ordinary people, just like them, who came to help from far away, from beyond the farthest sea. For many, the staff remained a mystery and were easily dismissed as one more mystery in a mysterious world. For Onya’s tribe, more primitive than most due to their unfortunate ceremonial tradition of sacrificing their brightest children, rumors of the visitors caused some initial fearfulness. When they encountered no hostility, however, the tribe hurried on its way, quickly forgetting the young Onya who had disappeared only a day before the moon sacrifice.

In the city Onya was encouraged to rest, to catch up with sleep, and get used to being washed and clean. This final requirement was made at the insistence of a growing number of citizens, both for obvious reasons and prompted by what they were learning about the transmission of disease.

When Onya finally emerged from her cottage, she was accompanied by Watami, who, because of her connection with the girl, was assigned as her mentor. This was the way of the Prince’s staff: the newcomer benefited from a familiar presence in her or his early days in the city; at the same time, it allowed Watami to learn what Onya knew while she was teaching her. In this case the match was exceptionally fortuitous, because once Onya felt secure in her new home, Watami found the girl intensely curious to learn about

everything. Onya, in turn, never having been cared for in her tribal family, adored the older woman and focused on remembering everything she was being told.

After five days, well-fed on all the strange new foods, clean and clothed in the white, woven robe worn by both women and men, Onya was taken to meet her future companions and teachers of the council faculty. The staff, recognizing her high natural intelligence, had placed her in that faculty upon her arrival.

Crossing wide streets, flanked by cottages with natives not unlike herself tending small plots with grasses and flowers she'd never seen before, Onya wanted to stop at every new sight.

"You will find out more when we get to the HQ. To the HQ," Watami said slowly, annunciating clearly in the language they'd developed between them from the few words they shared and pulling gently on the young girl's arm. In this manner, stopping and starting as Onya caught sight of one puzzle after another, the two young women crisscrossed their way through the neatly kept streets, with Watami trying to keep up with the constant questions.

"That's a way of bringing water to our fields," Watami said, as they passed an irrigation ditch with a charming little waterfall.

"The skins you slept on in your room? That's how we treat them to make them soft," the mentor said in answer to Onya's wrinkling her nose at the strong smell of animal urine.

"You see how the ox helps us carry heavy loads," she said, soothing Onya's fear of this enormous creature plodding along with two large loads of bricks strapped on its back.

A pigeon flapped low overhead before landing on the roof of one of the larger buildings. Onya could hear the sonorous cooing of other birds greeting their companion on her return, and, turning quizzically to her mentor, she found Watami with her finger up against her mouth in the universal gesture of silence. Somewhere, from one of the cottages they'd just passed, came the sound of what Watami later said was a flute, while both stood silent and still, listening. Watami's eyes were closed and her head tilted in concentration as the sound of the flute joined the gentle murmuring of the birds, caressing their happy gurgling with a ribbon of sound, before swooping and soaring,

the long descending note echoing in its cadence the flight of the returning bird.

“Beautiful, isn’t it?!” Watami opened her eyes to see tears running down Onya’s cheeks. It was the first time she’d seen the girl cry, and she was clearly touched that it was beauty and not pain that made her weep.

“The birds. The pigeons,” she continued gently, after letting the girl weep out her tears, and resumed her running commentary. “Do you know what we use the pigeons for?”

Onya wiped her face with the sleeve of the robe, a puzzled look appearing from under the cloth.

“When we travel away from the city on long journeys, we always take some of the pigeons with us. Then, when we need to get a report back to the city, how do you think we do it?”

Onya had no answer for that. It seemed to me she was more intrigued by the sound of the flute than particularly interested in birds. Birds she’d seen before.

“We tie a tiny, very light, object to the pigeon’s leg and when we let the bird go, it flies right back here to its home and family.” Continuing when Onya still looked mystified: “We agree before we set out which object to send and what it means. So, when we get where we’re going we can send a message back. It’s been a lifesaver a few times when we’ve been able to call for help. . . .”

She could have been talking to herself. Onya was running ahead while Watami still gazed up at the pigeons. When she caught up with the girl, she could see what was drawing her attention. On a broad, green swath of grassland were two of the most enormous birds Onya had ever seen. These weren’t the large vultures she’d seen picking at the carcasses of dead animals with their long curved beaks—and they were scary enough! Stand five men, one on top of the other, and they might not be able to reach the crown of feathers tufting from the top of one of these birds’ heads.

Watami pulled on Onya’s arm, urging the clearly terrified girl toward the birds, who by this time had noticed the two humans moving unsteadily toward them and were starting to make encouraging clucking sounds.

Getting closer to the birds, it was hard to miss Onya’s change of behavior.

Her initial fright and reluctance were seemingly magically replaced by the broadest of smiles. She broke away from Watami's grasp and was running toward the birds, who were preening themselves in the sun.

They were evidently even larger than Onya had thought they were. I saw her stopping some yards away, the two fandors towering above her, and I waited for the inevitable trick the birds enjoyed playing on the newcomers. It was all in good fun, of course. The fandors were turning out to be so useful to the staff that they were seldom reprimanded for their jokes.

Onya stood gazing up at the two colossal birds, who'd moved farther apart from one another as the girl approached them, forcing her to crane her neck from side to side. I saw Watami slow to a halt perhaps twenty yards away. She knew what was going to happen. She'd seen it a dozen times—with some bizarre results.

Without a sign, as if they were one, the two birds suddenly, and with a massive snapping sound, both extended their enormous wings so as to surround the girl in a dome of golden feathers. The fandors, their sleek heads bent down toward the girl, I knew were watching intently for her reaction. This was what was important to them. The birds were what we came to call "semitelepathic." You might think of it these days as a term for an extreme form of empathy. Because of this, fandors were able to pick up a human's intentions and assess the person's emotional state with extraordinary accuracy.

The massive birds were first discovered by a couple of the staff from the Board of Animal Domestication and Utilization (I use the titles the councils gave themselves) on one of their flights over a chain of mountains on one of the great southern continents.

High in the Atlas Mountains, as the sun was rising over the jagged peaks, the staff members had caught the glint of gold far below them. Descending quickly, they lost the glimmer in the deep shadows. Floating farther down into the broad valley over which they thought they'd seen the glistening mirage, they cruised through the morning mist, the electrogravitic drive train of their craft leaving a rainbow trail of water droplets, as they searched the adjacent valleys for whatever it was they might have seen. Still nothing. After a while the pair gave up looking, and, deciding it must have been the sun glistening off an exposed seam of mica, they set the controls of the craft into

a gentle vertical climb.

Then, as they looked up from the instrument panel, they saw that they were surrounded by enormous birds swooping and soaring in a spiraling double helix and rising with their craft in an updraft of their own. This wasn't the one flash of gold the pair expected to find; this wasn't one of anything. This was dozens upon dozens of improbably large birds—maybe more than a hundred, they agreed later—some with wingspans of forty feet or more.

Soon the sun was blotted out by circling wings as the craft and the birds rose together. If they could have seen it from the outside, it looked like a majestic column of shimmering gold. Feeling oddly safe, all the pair wanted to do was to settle back and enjoy the show. Fortunately for the people back in the city, the viewing panels, as well as being the windows for the crew, also acted as flat-field recording devices that caught the birds' helical dance for posterity. It was only then, when they were viewing the images back in the council HQ and they could slow them down, stopping the display when needed, that they saw what the crew had missed in the moment: the obvious gleam of intelligence in the eyes of the birds diving so close to the craft.

Of course the pair was frightened at first, as the two staff told their colleagues when they returned to the city. Neither had ever encountered creatures like this on their planets of mortal origin.

"Yet what was so astonishing," said the female crew member, Böni, one of the head officials in animal domestication, "was that the fear passed in an instant. One moment we were terrified—the whole world around was exploding with movement—the next we were lounging back in our seats, laughing happily and admiring the spectacle."

"Couldn't take our eyes off the birds," the pilot added, "and then this warm glow spread through us." Böni was nodding in agreement, encouraging him to continue.

"How could this have happened, anyway? We searched through all those valleys . . . found nothing!"

"When we gave up looking," Böni broke in, "and we must have been down there for more than an hour, only when we threw up our arms in despair, certain of never finding anything . . . only then . . . did those birds appear. It was almost like a joke . . ." her voice drifted off thoughtfully.

And, of course, when they came to know the fandors better, they realized that it was a joke. A practical joke.

The first of many.

8

Out-of-Body Travels

Denial and Retreat, the Fandors' Gifts, an Experience of God, Night Terrors, and the Treatment of Animals

After six months of working weekly with Mary Ann and her E-meter, Mein Host found that all the suppressed negative feelings he had for the woman exploded into a ferocious argument. By now half a dozen of his friends, struck by the changes they saw in him, had signed up for sessions and were already becoming committed to the process.

Because Mary Ann was such a psychically perceptive and powerful woman, from the start she dominated the little group. Having come to know her better over the previous months, Mein Host, although valuing the sessions and what he was learning about himself through them, didn't like Mary Ann any better than when he'd first met her. He hung on, pushing aside his reservations, overlooking her dictatorial ways, and yet half admiring the certainty with which she expressed her opinions.

The evening of the eruption, five of them were sitting around the kitchen table in the apartment Mein Host shared on Lexham Gardens, in southwest London. The participants that evening were Mary Ann and Robert, Mein Host, and two of his friends, both aligned with Mary Ann and both of whom were getting involved with what was now being called Compulsions Analysis. They were meeting for coffee, as they'd done a number of times before. What started between the five as a discussion turned into an argument and then quickly accelerated into an angry, full-blown confrontation between Mary Ann and Mein Host, the other three sensibly keeping out of the way.

Mary Ann was a tough, smart woman, with the added advantage of knowing Mein Host's vulnerabilities as a result of all those sessions. She was a formidable opponent—vicious and implacable. The lad put on a good show, but he was no match for her. She would not back down. But, to both their

credit, it was the first time in his life he'd allowed himself to become overtly furious with someone he felt had authority over him—and a woman, no less!

The subject of the argument is of less importance than the immediate consequences of it. Mein Host felt perfectly justified in walking out after four hours, leaving the apartment that very night. Never wanting to see or talk to Mary Ann ever again, he went off to live elsewhere with a new girlfriend.

After the argument I could see from the state of his emotional body that it had stirred up a deep-rooted chain of memories of betrayal and abuse by those attempting to exert control over him—a father he never had the opportunity to know due to his mother's decision to disallow it; the not entirely relinquished childish conviction that Hitler and his doodlebugs were trying to kill him; a mother, loving enough, but too busy to spend much time with him when he was at home; an uncle who beat him in anger; priests incapable of answering his questions without losing their tempers; a housemaster who believed lies spread deliberately about him and beat the boy time and again. Then there were Diana's ardent admirers whom he suspected were kind to him only to reach her heart; architectural tutors who casually dismissed months of work simply because they couldn't understand it; and, finally, and most persistently, the many beatings he received from his bullying nemesis at Charterhouse.

All this and more was swirling around in his emotional body just beneath the surface of his conscious awareness. I could see how deeply disturbed he was. He'd never been able to experience and express such fury before. He'd invariably found himself on the victim's end of injustice, and, like all English boys of his class and time, he was taught to grin and bear it—stiff upper lip and all that.

Sure enough, in all the excitement of a beautiful new girlfriend and the increasing pressures of his final years at architectural college, the old habits reasserted themselves and I watched as he once again firmly repressed the pain of his childhood traumas. Let's not forget that chronic goal of his to be self-sufficient, established on the E-meter. He'd devised this goal in life unconsciously in order to protect himself from the abuse and betrayals he'd endured throughout his life up to that point. He'd peeked into the abyss and recoiled in horror.

Yet he was still far from becoming conscious of what was happening to

him.

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Onya was proving to be an exception to anyone who’d previously been introduced to the fandors.

As the two enormous birds enclosed the young girl in their feathery embrace, rather than shrinking in abject fear, as had so many previous newcomers, I watched her as she turned in small circles with her arms outstretched, eyes closed in a face lit by a serene smile. The fandors then lowered their heads in what we learned later, when we knew the creatures better, was a reverent bow delivered before those within whom the birds felt the Presence of the Indwelling Spirit.

For Onya it must have seemed as if she were in Paradise. The crown of long feathers springing from the heads of the fandors tickled her neck, making her giggle with happiness. Finally stopping her little dance, she opened her eyes to find both birds with their long necks bent; their large, brown eyes filled with friendly intelligence and their wide, flat beaks only inches away from her face. Beaming with pleasure Onya grasped first one fandor beak, then the second one, in a fond embrace, trying to wrap her arms around their necks and laying her head against the soft feathers edging their beaks.

After this odd ceremony was complete and the fandors closed their wings before stalking off on their long legs, Watami ran to where Onya was still standing in what I could see from her emotional body was a state of bliss. From my preliminary reconnaissance of the girl, a report always required before the staff set about their telepathic signaling, I observed that she’d had little happiness in her life. Resented by her siblings for her intelligence, disliked by her mother for her independence, and beaten by her father daily, Onya experienced bliss as an entirely new sensation.

“I felt the same as those beautiful birds,” the girl managed to say through tears of joy as Watami held her in her arms. “I felt so loved by them. I wasn’t frightened at all.”

They walked slowly, their arms around each other, across the fandor field to where a stream babbled between water-smoothed rocks and banks of grass nibbled short by the birds. Settling down in the shade of a tree, they could see

a small group of humans on the other side of the field, people who Watami explained were like Onya. They, too, had been called to the city to learn all the ways of living better.

“When we’ve completed your training, you can go back to your family and pass along what you’ve learned.” Noticing Onya’s grimace at that idea, Watami added quickly, “Of course that doesn’t always happen. It’s up to us. If you really want to stay in the city and we find what you’re good at, sometimes we allow people like you to stay on here.”

This must have cheered the girl up. She wanted to know more about her new feathered friends.

“Fandors, you mean? Aren’t they wonderful! And that feeling you got, Onya—that was the fandors’. They can make that happen if they like a person. Or if the person is special in some way.”

Onya grew thoughtful at that.

“Am I a special person, then, Watami?”

“Well, we’re all special, Onya, in our own ways. Looks like the fandors feel you’re special, and that’s what counts.”

“How are you special, Watami?”

“Remember how we stopped when we saw the pigeons?” Onya nodded, enjoying the sensation of wriggling her bare legs against the grass. “And I told you about how pigeons carry particular objects back from wherever we go? We’re just starting something new. I’ve been in Faad’s council learning how to write. To make marks that mean the same thing as when we talk.” Watami traced out a letter she’d learned in the grass with a forefinger when she saw her charge’s look of incomprehension.

“When I get good at it, Onya, they want me to teach the pigeon handlers how to write the messages on tiny pieces of something we make out of wasps’ nests. This is a lot lighter for the birds, so more can be communicated in a written message than how it’s done at the moment.” Watami must have lost the girl, because, after a long silence, it was back to the fandors.

“You know what it’s a bit like?” Onya’s eyes were closed again. “Not quite the same, though. But when I saw the city under the rainbow in my dreams, I felt safe and warm in the same way. I didn’t hear any words when I was with the fandors, not the way I did in the dreaming.”

“It’s the fandors who pick their people. Did you know that?” That grabbed Onya’s attention.

“They’re generally friendly,” Watami continued, “but if they don’t like someone, they can easily kill you with one whack of those wings. And you should see them run when they have to. Nothing can catch ’em.”

“Who are they, Watami? I mean, where do they come from?”

“After Böni first discovered them and returned with reports of these intelligent flying creatures, of course everybody couldn’t wait to meet them. When the birds got over their initial wariness, it turned out they were just as intrigued with us and what we were doing in the city. So they started sending envoys. Three or four came at a time. They’d stay for a turning of the moon and then leave one morning unexpectedly. We wouldn’t see them for a while, then just as unexpectedly we’d wake up in the morning and there would be a bunch of fandors quietly munching on the grass and waiting for us to notice them.

“Tell you what, Onya. When we talk to the council, I’m going to suggest that you meet Böni and some of her people. They’ll be very interested to hear how the fandors took to you. It’s extremely rare. I’ve never seen quite that response before, although I have heard about it.”

“Oh! Let’s go and do that now. C’mon, Watami!” said Onya, energetically pulling her mentor to her feet. “You can tell me more about fandors while we’re walking there.”

“Well, we still don’t know that much about them,” Watami said, enjoying being the teacher, “but if we walk in this direction, I’ll show you something you’ve never seen before.”

The couple made their way through the clean, neat streets, crossing over into the subdivision devoted to animal domestication. Onya noticed a subtle difference in the layout of the cottages—they were farther apart, and each had its own couple of acres of land. She saw larger fields subdivided into small sections containing different types of cattle, some of which she’d seen in the distance, roaming wild across the grassland, when she was collecting water for the tribe.

They stopped when Onya pointed out one of the beasts she said was just like the wild cattle her father had tried, and failed, to fence off in the land

behind the village.

“My father always said it was impossible to tame them, although I think it was really his bad temper.”

Watami had seen the deep bruises on the girl’s body after she first arrived and had applied one of her mysterious salves, which largely removed the markings. Onya hadn’t wanted to talk about it at the time, so I could see Watami looking quietly happy that she was starting to open up about her earlier life.

Onya was prattling on, oblivious.

“Once I heard the elders talking about the good old days, when they were just following the herd. Then they were free, they said. They didn’t have the worries they have now. They complained about the women, too. About how it was different now that they were more settled. Somebody I couldn’t see said, ‘Talk! Talk! Talk!’ in a silly voice and everyone laughed. I didn’t like that. That’s when I crept back to bed.”

Watami pulled on the girl’s arm, seeming to bring her back from her unhappy memories, and they hurried on.

“When you first arrived, Onya, the staff thought you’d do best in Faad’s council, where I am. Then you could have studied writing with me. But, after watching you and those fandors together, I think Böni’s going to want you for something she’s working on. I’m not going to tell you what—it’d spoil the surprise. But here, have a look at this before we go in.”

They were drawing near a large two-story building set in a copse of tall trees and standing at the nexus of five wide avenues. Getting close, it wasn’t the building that prompted Onya to run ahead of her mentor but what appeared to her to be a pyramid of colored light.

“I thought you’d like that!” Watami called out as she was catching up with the girl. “Can you guess what they are?”

Onya looked in awe at this pile of perfectly round crystal balls. The top of the pyramid stood at her eye level. Each translucent globe with a diameter about the length of her forearm glittered in the bright sunlight. Beyond this she could see where another pile of these crystal balls, looking like a truncated pyramid, was starting to grow.

“They come from the fandors,” Watami was telling her wondering charge.

The cracks and fault lines in the heart of the crystals were refracting the trapped light into constantly shifting rainbows as Onya clapped her hands in joy.

“When they first come to the city, each fandor brings one of these as a gift. We don’t know where the balls come from, or how they’re made. But look. Aren’t they beautiful? See how the colors bounce around from ball to ball, Onya?”

The young girl was walking solemnly around the base of the pyramid, running her hands over the smooth surface of the globes, peering through the gaps at Watami on the other side, and giggling with pleasure.

“Since they’re so beautiful in the sun,” Watami said through the gaps, “we put them out here on the lawn in front of the institute, although we still don’t know what they’re for. We sometimes see the fandors collecting around the pyramid as the sun is coming up—we think perhaps they’re meditating, or even worshipping. It’s impossible to say, but it made us even more curious about them.”

Onya was shaking her head in amazement. The globes were so perfectly round, so smooth to the touch, and so mysteriously appealing; she’d never seen anything like them in her life. There was something else, too—a palpable resonance emanating from the pyramid of globes running up and down her spine as a tingling energy before settling in her base chakra. Her eyes were closed, her head thrown back, and her body trembling with energy when Watami joined her.

Out of the corner of her eye, the older girl could see Böni, who would have been watching from the window of her second-floor study as usual, coming over to join them. Watami became suddenly reverential—she still hadn’t entirely become accustomed to being physically close to one of the staff. The size of them and the way they always seemed to know what she was thinking unsettled her. She knew Faad a little better, because she was in his faculty; Böni she only recognized by sight but had heard rumors of her spontaneity and sense of fun.

In an early decision, the staff chose to keep themselves apart from the social life of the rest of the city’s inhabitants. They taught in their institutes and faculties but preferred to live in a compound of their own in the middle of a park at the cooler, northern limits of the city. From there they could

come and go in their craft without being observed by the citizens.

The original reason for this segregation was a valid one. They didn't want the perpetual adoration and dependency that humans tended to manifest around them. They believed it was far better to use their one hundred companions, as well as the more advanced humans they were training, to make the most of the social contact with the human newcomers to the city. In this way the natural fear level of the mortals, so painful to the staff 's greater emotional sensitivity, was easier to dissipate.

I recall back in one of the early briefings on the System Headquarters Planet that the staff was specifically counseled to avoid the temptation to cultivate a close kinship with the humans who had donated their genetic bioplasm to be cloned for their physical vehicles. There was concern that they might even grow to love the humans. However, they were warned that those mortals called into the city would present a different challenge.

"You're likely to get fed up with them," said one of their more caustic teachers at the System HQ, a Planetary Prince hailing from another world in this Local System, who'd elected to remain in a pedagogic post.

"The mortals, I mean. They'll frustrate you, and you'll likely get more depressed than you thought possible. Even the best of them are distrusting and cunning. You'll find yourselves wanting to spend more time with each other—just to get away from them. You'll need to be aware of this . . ." He stopped talking when a murmur of protest arose from his gathered audience.

Because there'd been such intense competition for the one hundred staff chosen for the mission, I noticed, even at those early stages, a general tendency among them to be somewhat overconfident. Some were catching each others' eyes while the Prince was speaking and sticking out their chests in postures of imagined success.

"You'll need to know this," the Prince was insisting, his voice rising over the good-humored protests, "because it is going to be a challenge. Always stay in your heart. Stay open and compassionate and remember: you were like them once!"

That quieted them down.

"Try not to think of them as animals—not as monkeys just down from the trees. Think of them rather as children, and sometimes as naughty and violent

children, too. And always remember: the ones you will be calling in for at least the first fifty thousand years will be the cream of the crop. Don't think for a moment that all the mortals you will encounter when you travel out of the city will be like them.

"It's not an easy planet, as I'm sure you've been told. The animal and vegetable life is particularly profuse. Our surveys show that there are a frightening number of large animals at the top of their particular food chains who are implacable killing machines. Remember this when you get annoyed with how fearful the people are! They've made it through to this point thanks to their cunning, their intelligence, and their capacity to cooperate with one another for mutual survival. They only mutated from their primate forebears half a million years ago! You'll find it far more challenging than what you remember of your own home worlds, so you'll need to take a wider view.

"I might be proved wrong about this, but from my experience with these early missions, I think you'll find that this planet is being quietly primed to become an exceptional world. I predict, and you can sue me if I'm wrong, that some truly exceptional humans will emerge out of the planet's violent and unforgiving evolutionary process. The challenges are such that natural selection is sure to lead to an impressive level of individual intelligence and physical health."

The lecture was drawing to a close. The Prince surveyed the bleachers, taking in the staff packing away their recorders and shuffling on their seats in anticipation. I remember looking down at the group from the back of the theater and wondering whether they had any idea what they were getting themselves into.

The Prince was leaning forward now, speaking more confidentially.

"You might even find some of them quite enchanting—but don't get too involved. They're heartbreakers. Always remember: to you they'll be living and dying in the blink of an eye. And to them, your immortality will always be a source of envy and contention."

He let that sink in for a long pause before asking, "Any questions before we break?"

I couldn't see the one who responded. She was down in the front of the lecture hall, whereas we angels were expected to remain in the rear. This

wasn’t our show. We were the aides, the trainees. We were expected to report to the staff, not to advise them. For this reason, I didn’t make a fuss when the staff started turning inward over the first ten thousand years, just as they were warned not to.

“We’ll show you, Highness! We won’t let you down!” Not a question, of course, as they were all getting to their feet to leave, and it was encouraging to hear the conviction in her voice. Yet there was also something about her self-assurance that put me on edge.

It’s easy to be wise after the event, and many of my observations about the Prince, his deputy, Daligastia—like Caligastia, also a Descending Son—and the behavior of his staff will be colored by my (hopefully) retrospective wisdom. I say, only in my defense, that many of the hints I received at the time, which have flowered here in this narrative with perhaps a higher degree of certainty than I felt at the moment, I pen here for the first time. I do this to try to uncover how everything went so terribly wrong on this blighted world. How could such a well-orchestrated mission, an event repeated at the appropriate stage on every inhabited world in a vast Multiverse and equipped with magnificent deathless bodies and a matchless environment—how did all this fall apart?

The understanding that those who ignore the past are condemned to repeat it is as true for angels as it is for humans. Now, as your world enters the troubled twenty-first century, it’s vitally important that we, angels, understand what occurred behind the scenes so that we too can grow in wisdom. I feel I need to learn everything I can about the fundamental errors of judgment made by the Prince and his staff so many tens of thousands of years ago—errors that contributed so directly to making this world the place it is today.

I write this because I want to know what happened.

⁂

In spite of his four-year relationship with Vicky and the time spent with Ruth, Jennifer, Penny, and a handful of other young women, I’ve heard Mein Host speak of Jean as his first serious love. She was not only a fine match for his intelligence but also was blessed with a quality no woman he’d met until then possessed. She was bold, courageous, and enjoyed an adventure in both the

inner and outer realms.

We've met Jean before in this narrative as Mein Host's companion in their entheogenic investigations together. From the moment they met they experienced a metaphysical closeness neither could quite explain—one that remains strong to this day. His first telepathic experiences occurred with Jean, as did the most profound and spiritual journeys he'd had up to that point in his life.

Although Mein Host has never entertained this thought in the intervening fifty years, Jean was, in fact, his first lasting encounter with another reincarnate. He wouldn't have been able to understand or appreciate it at the time, and, because there was nothing negative carrying over from their previous lifetime together, neither had a need to know. He had not yet had a series of experiences that would convince him of the reality of reincarnation —that would occur several years later—so he simply recognized that there was something deeply familiar about Jean in a way he hadn't encountered before and settled down to enjoy this new sort of closeness.

And it was an exhilarating time for the young man. A beautiful and successful girlfriend a couple of years older than him who turned out to be a courageous entheogenic companion, and who, while every bit as skeptical as Mein Host, was equally curious as to what might really be going on in the world. Still in his final years at college and not yet numbed by the tedium of working in Julian's office, he was excited by the challenges he faced in his designs for both the Pleasure Dome and the Film School. Through Jean he was meeting a new set of older and more mature friends. All this and more contributed to making this time in his twenty-fourth year a watershed moment in his life.

If I am making this period sound like a fluid and easy transition, it also had its share of disappointments and struggles. When Mein Host became disillusioned with Mary Ann and Robert, he also lost touch with the friends who'd become involved with them and their E-meters. I could see that consciously he was relieved and happy to be free of Mary Ann's dominating presence. But I could also perceive something of which he was not aware: all the psychotherapy work he'd done with Mary Ann over the previous six months had stirred up his repressed thoughtforms—his demons—without actually releasing them.

As a consequence, for all his confident exterior and growing ease with the ways of the world, he remained subconsciously an extremely troubled young man. The skepticism, verging on cynicism, which had served him up to now by forcing him to develop an effective rational intelligence, was starting to break down in the face of the transcendent entheogenic experiences he was having with Jean.

I was in his auric field one weekend, for example, when the young couple consumed two sugar cubes, each laced with five hundred micrograms of pure pharmaceutical LSD-25. As the substance was peaking, I observed Mein Host entering a phase he described afterward as the "White Light." He had no words to describe it, nor a belief system to account for it. He couldn't have known this at the time, but it was the most profound, purely spiritual experience of his life so far—in a very real sense it was his first experience of God.

Yet, the lad had an exceptionally hard head.

This first encounter with the Divine didn't fit into any of his categories, any of the ways he was trying to understand the fundamentals of life. He hadn't yet read Aldous Huxley or Alan Watts and their insights into the entheogenic experience, and so was left with this profoundly moving spiritual encounter and no way of consciously assimilating it into his everyday life.

What I could perceive, however, was that this encounter chipped away another large chunk of disbelief from the wall of hyper-rationalism with which he'd surrounded himself. His experience with the snake that entered his eye was the first time he was brought face-to-face with the hidden depths to life, and it terrified him. When he dissolved into the White Light and felt the "love and peace everlasting," it reached even deeper into his psyche. Here was the most profound joy and wonder the young man had ever felt, orders of magnitude greater than any worldly pleasure. Yet, it would still be many years before he would know—really know—that it was an experience of the Divine and was fully able to accept it.

To his credit, Mein Host was always an intensely curious person. He was one of those little boys who are impelled to take machines apart to find out how they function. Always good at precision work with his hands, he created radio "crystal sets" as a child and repaired his friends' watches at school. His early fascination with computers and cybernetics all suggested that his

interests would take him in a technological direction.

Perhaps his life might have gone in that direction were not other forces at work. The events were mysterious, came upon him without any warning, and were extremely painful. They also happened over a three-year period, occurring eight times before Mein Host finally understood what to do.

Compressing these events that so terrified him in their painful intensity and their unpredictability into a few paragraphs will barely do justice to the effect they had on his understanding of the structure of reality.

This is how I observed these incidents, for all of which I was present, drawn into his aura to give solace to his pain.

Unrelated to his daily activities, as far as Mein Host knew, he would awaken from a deep sleep, Jean fast asleep beside him, his head locked into a shattering vibration that he later described as having the impact of a jackhammer. He would clutch his head in agony as the frightful noisy vibrations increased in volume and ferocity, tensing his whole body against the impact of each hammering blow. Because pain knows no time, the torture seemed to him to go on endlessly before finally dissipating as quickly and unpredictably as it had arrived.

After the third time this occurred, each incident separated by a few months, he started becoming fearful of going to sleep, trying to put off the torment for as long as possible. However, the unpredictability of the attacks—that's how he referred to them—thwarted any attempt to preempt them by willful sleeplessness. Months would pass, and just when he starting hoping he'd never have to feel the agony again, a night would come and I'd find him curled up in pain, every muscle in him straining against the blows.

By the fifth time this occurred, knowing the vibrations would end sooner or later appeared to mitigate the dread that something might be terribly wrong with him—although this recognition did little to reduce the pain. During the next two events, perhaps a year and a half later, I detected a slightly different approach starting to dawn on the lad. It was so counter-intuitive that it had never occurred to him on the previous occasions and provided only marginal relief when he cautiously attempted it.

Rather than tensing up to resist the pain—his instinctive response, yet one that did nothing to alleviate or halt the agony—he decided consciously to

relax into the shattering hammering. When he first tried this, the vibrations got worse until he could no longer stand it and tensed up again. Determined not to tense up the next time, he found that if he relaxed and tolerated the pain, it did indeed dissipate after initially increasing in intensity.

The eighth and final time the vibrations hammered into his consciousness three years after the events started, he was living in a different situation, sleeping in a bedroom on the fourth floor of a London mansion. It had been at least a year since the previous attack, and, like all the other times, it arrived completely unexpectedly and seemed to Mein Host to be, once again, totally unrelated to his daily life.

This time when he awoke to the vibrations he wasn't frightened and knew what to do. Focusing on relaxing into the pain worked because the blows almost immediately melted away, causing him to sit up in relieved surprise. Opening his eyes, he looked around the room, which must have appeared perfectly normal to him in the half-light seeping through the window until he swiveled fully around to look at the bookshelves behind him.

At that moment he saw his torso, his chest, his shoulders, and his head, with its eyes closed, stretched out improbably beneath him. Although he had no way of comprehending what was happening—he wouldn't learn about astral bodies until sometime later—it was clear to him that it was no delusion. He was sitting up fully conscious, and yet there was his body lying asleep behind him. At the same time, it was unlike any dream he'd ever had, however lucid, as he soon discovered when he climbed out of his body and walked to the door. When he reached to turn the handle, his hand passed right through the door, quickly followed by the rest of his body. It appeared quite natural to him as he slipped down the four floors of carpeted stairs and out the front door into the quiet street. Standing in the middle of the road, lit, as he said later, by a "strange inner light," looking to his right and left, I wondered if he'd seen me in the astral glow. Fortunately, there was no sign of that as he turned and moved steadily to his left.

Not quite believing what was happening to him, yet filled with an unaccustomed joy and unaware of whether he was walking or gliding, he got fifty yards down the road before I saw him suddenly look down at his body. Because he habitually slept without clothes, his astral body also appeared to him to be naked. And he was in the middle of a London street at night!

Because he wasn’t an exhibitionist by nature, the impact of the sight shocked him back into his physical vehicle to lie awake for the next few hours pondering what just happened to him. Painful though the experience was initially, it was no longer a fearful challenge. If this strange “outof-body” realm was there waiting for him, then he resolved to greet the next occasion it happened with more focused awareness.

This was the first clue he had to the astral realms, which he later became more familiar with as his confidence grew over the years. But back then his skeptical, materialist, viewpoint was shattering every bit as much as the jackhammers were breaking through his mental rigidity.

* * *

Onya, back in the city and happily astonished at all she was seeing, was young, highly intelligent, and had a flexible, open mind. Let’s follow her as Watami leads her up the steps into the broad, well-lit entrance foyer of the Board of Animal Domestication and Utilization. Böni was waiting for the pair as they passed through the doors and greeted them warmly before leading them down a wide corridor deeper into the building.

Watami maintained the reverential silent-unless-spoken-to demeanor she always assumed with the staff members, while Onya squealed alternatively in delight, horror, and surprise at the various vivaria tucked into alcoves on both sides of the corridor. Some contained small animals who’d made their vivarium their home; other alcoves contained some of the larger animals standing oddly still, but just as terrifying to Onya, who became quite convinced an artfully stuffed lion was about to pounce.

A silvery ripple of laughter seemed to emanate from Böni as she paused to reassure the girl, who was hiding now behind Watami’s robe.

“Look closer, little one.” Böni appeared to be speaking in Onya’s tribal tongue, although the girl wasn’t sure whether she was really hearing it or whether it was all happening in her head. “Be brave and look closer. See how we have used the skin of the lion and stuffed straw into it to make it look real. It fooled you, didn’t it, little Onya?” Böni’s tinkling laugh joining with Onya’s as the girl lost her fear and stroked the soft, golden fur around the lion’s muzzle.

“We’re making an inventory, a list of all the plant and animal species we

find, and this”—Böni was pointing at the vivaria, some with beautifully represented or painted backgrounds—“is a way of reminding ourselves how richly numerous the species are.”

They passed still and silent animals Onya had never seen before. Two enormous creatures that Böni called elephants, their longs trunks stretched high in the air over the girl’s head, stopped Onya in her tracks. She’d clearly never encountered anything quite as large and terrifying.

“You’ll see more elephants in your time in the city, and don’t be surprised if there are people riding on top of them. They’re not as intelligent as the fandors, but they like to be of help when we need their strength.”

They reached a large central courtyard bordered on all four sides by cloistered galleries on both floors and echoing with the calls of birds. The center of the space was built up to form what Böni called a very small mountain. It stood at the height of the two-story surrounding structure and appeared to be shaped to represent quite a different landscape from anything Onya had seen before. Rather than the flat and softly undulating plains of the Arabian Peninsula, the “little mountain” reared up out of the ground, its surface sculpted into sheer rock faces, steep valleys, and small plateaus covered with tiny trees the likes of which Onya had never seen before. Small streams fell into miniature waterfalls, trickling down through little gurgling brooks to gather in a miniature lake at the base of the mountain.

“This fascinates you, Onya?” Böni’s voice assumed a singsong tone. “You see these little trees? They’re real. Yes, you can touch them. Be careful, though. They’re fragile.” Onya was running her hand over the tops of the trees she could reach. They were real, she had no doubt about that.

“Come on, Onya. You’ll learn more about that later,” said Böni, smiling and leading the way to the far corner of the courtyard, where she gestured to Watami to leave her alone with the girl as they went into a well-lit corner room.

“Sit over here, next to me,” said Böni, gesturing to a cushioned bench that seemed to Onya to grow out of the wall. The room was sparsely furnished but filled with flowering plants in clay pots decorated with strange symbols that meant nothing to the girl. The two external walls that formed the corner of the room were arched and led out onto a wide, shaded verandah and a smooth green lawn beyond. Three fandors were grazing in the shrubbery bordering

the lawn.

Böni filled a pitcher with the water trickling out of a fountain built into one of the walls and joined Onya on the bench. The girl was touching the fabric of the cushions, running her fingers over the surface of the cloth, her face alive with wonder.

“You’ll learn all about that while you’re here, Onya.” Böni poured them both water into small clay cups. “You’ll be staying with us for a while. You’re not a captive. If you wish to be returned to your clan, we can make sure that will happen.”

I’d no doubt that Böni, as a staff member, knew very well what awaited the girl if she went back to her tribe and merely wished to make sure Onya realized how fortunate she was to have been plucked out of what would have been certain death.

Both were now sitting cross-legged on their cushions facing each other on the bench. Onya took this opportunity to examine the older woman, and this was the first puzzle. She was a tall, slim woman with long, blond hair wound around the top of her head, adding to the impression of height. Her smooth skin, though bronzed by the sun, was far lighter than Onya’s, and the eyes looking coolly back at the girl were of the lightest amber. She had high cheekbones and a long, finely modeled nose set above a full and generous mouth. When Böni spoke, Onya could see large and sparklingly white teeth.

At a time when life could be brutally short and it was rare to reach the age of forty, Onya had no way of judging the woman’s age. She appeared to be young and healthy, but to Onya she felt ancient. It was all very puzzling for the young girl. Her tribe had known about the city for so long, generations passing down what little they knew about the strange happenings on the southern coast of the peninsula, that the city had become a terrifying legend seldom spoken about, and then only in whispered warnings. Yet, here was Böni sitting quietly in front of her, with a kind smile on her face, far from the monster with which parents used to frighten the children of the tribe.

“We’ve been watching your tribe for many, many generations, Onya.” Böni must have picked up the girl’s thought pattern because she continued reassuringly. “So we know what they say about us. Don’t worry—no harm will come to you. Unless your clan changes its ways, you won’t need to go back. There’s always work to be done here.”

Onya was looking over the woman's shoulder, a sudden movement of one of the fandors catching her attention. Within a couple of moments there was a cacophonous flapping of wings, and all three birds were soaring up into the clear blue sky, carrying Onya up with them in her imagination.

"Now, that was interesting!" Böni, in her turn, was looking puzzled. "I know you must have bonded with the fandors you met on the way over here, but that's never happened before in all the time I've been here!"

Onya's eyes were open now with a beatific smile on her face. The woman's voice brought her back to the cool of the room and the look of amazement on Böni's face.

"As Watami may have told you already, we try our best to match our visitors' natural gifts with what we do here in the city. Seems to me the fandors have already chosen you, so I'm going to suggest to the others that we go along with this—at least, for the time being. Until we know what the fandors are up to."

Böni's eyes closed for a moment, and in response to her telepathic signal the door opened and Watami came in, her head lowered in respect.

"That's enough for now, Onya. Watami will take you to your new quarters, and we'll find out more about you and the fandors after you've settled in."

9

Sufi Teachers in Disguise

Perilous Journeys, a Reincarnational Clue, a Smuggler's Dilemma, Immortal Privileges, and Rebellions as Cosmic Theater

As the designer Mary Quant's favorite model, Jean had a successful career by the time she met Mein Host, but at the age of twenty-five, two years older than my ward, she was growing bored with modeling and welcomed the diversion the younger man brought. Having freed herself from her commitments, they were able to travel together, spending his long summer vacations in Morocco or Turkey.

This period of my young Host's life lasted a little more than two years and was of particular interest to me, because it represented a time when he might well have lost his way. It started in Morocco, when he discovered kief, a mixture of cannabis and local black tobacco. Already familiar with the soaring clarity of the Iranian hashish he'd inadvertently brought back from his travels to India, he seemed to take very naturally to the far milder kief on a later trip to Tangier.

I observed the deeply sensual nature of cannabis expressing itself for the first time in the enchanting Moroccan village of Chefchaouen, set in the foothills of the Rif Mountains in the northwestern region of the country. I could see that the experience also stimulated Mein Host's interest in the mysterious power of sex.

What happened that swelteringly hot afternoon as he was lying back on the bed, alone in a tiny hotel room and gazing out over the cobbled alleys flanked by small houses painted, like the cobblestones, an identical shade of blue, was to become the first of Mein Host's glimpses into the subtleties of sex magic. However, in this case, it was innocent enough.

He had eaten some marjun, a delicious and cunningly concocted local kief sweetmeat made by the women, for the women. They thought of it as a more

discreet way of maintaining an elevated state of consciousness while going about their daily tasks. It was a rare gift, seldom discovered by outsiders, pressed into a surprised Mein Host's hands earlier that day by a veiled Moroccan woman with remarkably blue eyes who spoke a few words rapidly in Arabic before turning on her heel and disappearing into the market crowd.

I don't believe I'm betraying any confidence when I tell you that it was I, Georgia, who was quietly able to guide the woman to offer Mein Host the sweetmeats. I was able to do this because the woman was herself an Atlantean reincarnate for whom I'd lifted the veil long enough for her to see the young man as she had once known him. And this I could only do because they had both formed a preincarnational agreement for this event to occur at some point in both their lives.

But now perhaps I am giving away a little too much about what goes on in the wings, so I'll return to my ward propped against ornamental cushions on what appeared to be a camp bed in a small Chefchaouen hotel room. He lay there alert but quite still, and within an hour he found himself, once again, happily disassociated, out of his body and wandering invisibly through the village streets.

I watched, bemused, as his astral body stopped to gaze in wonderment at what must have been a truly memorable vision, in or out of a body! He stood unseen by any passerby in the middle of one of the cobbled alleys. Writing in his journal afterward, he noted that it was "like floating in the atmosphere, far above the clouds."

Returning sometime later to his recumbent vehicle lying on the bed in the tiny room, he found it wide awake and grateful for the astral body's return. After all, no body likes to be left alone!

As though in gratitude, his body then started doing something he had never previously experienced. Waves of sensual pleasure slowly began rippling up his body from his toes to the crown of his head, as if his body were an autonomous creature in its own right, with its own needs and pleasures. The waves became progressively more powerful as he lay there in puzzled ecstasy, yet aware enough to know to relax into the mysterious energy rather than fighting it. The rhythm of the waves slowly increased in speed and intensity, culminating in a majestic orgasm that rippled through the boy's body for the next half hour.

Nothing like this had even happened in his life before. It was entirely spontaneous. He hadn't been thinking about sex, or fantasizing about Jean. He hadn't even touched himself. The energy came as much out of the blue as had his journey out of his body only minutes earlier. He speculated afterward in his journal that perhaps both events had occurred because there was so little tension in his body. He'd never felt quite that relaxed and yet fully conscious and awake.

Naturally, I can't claim to be as surprised as Mein Host, because by encouraging the woman to give him the gift of marjun I was helping them to fulfill their pre-incarnational contract, but I had no clear idea of the effects. Because we angels are not sexual beings, the boy's long physical orgasm was as much a surprise for me as it was for him. Yet, over the years, I came to understand the occult reason for this.

What the pair of events—so closely associated in time and yet so different—accomplished was to open his eyes to entirely new sensations. Sometime later in his life he came to understand the mysterious, autonomous orgasm as the result of his parasympathetic nervous system being activated—a very different sensation from the more normal tension/ release mechanism of an orgasm more energetically triggered by the sympathetic nervous system.

In retrospect, I can appreciate one of the most important and long-lasting effects of that afternoon in Chefchaouen: it was an early introduction for him to a passive, receptive sexuality that is one of the keys to making the relationship I have been able to develop with my ward possible.

"The trick is to relax into the tension" became almost a mantra for him—one that was matched by a story he heard on one of his travels many years later from a young one-legged Balinese man. I believe there is an important lesson in this, so I'll repeat what I saw and heard onboard the ferry from Bali to Lombok, as Mein Host and his friend Michael were trying to find the location in the ocean where hundreds of thousands of dolphins gather each year for three days when the star Sirius is directly overhead.

Sitting next to the Balinese man, Mein Host struck up a conversation by asking him how he'd lost his leg. In remarkably good English (he'd learned the language after losing his career as a fisherman), he explained what happened without a hint of embarrassment.

"I am out in the boat with my father fishing . . . way, way out, far in ocean.

I only ten years, but I strong," he said proudly. "Yes, strong!

"Big storm come up before we know. Big, big waves. Dad try tying me into boat but only got rope 'roun' one leg when big, big wave crash our little boat. I thrown out . . . next I know . . . I in the water . . . I thought I goin' to die. . . ."

The film *Bonnie and Clyde* was playing loudly on a small video screen mounted near the roof of the ferry's main cabin. The rattle of Tommy guns briefly drowned out the words. After one of those universal gestures of noncomprehension from Mein Host, the man waited for the onscreen killing to stop before leaning closer to continue.

"Dad throw out life belt . . . but blew in wind, way away from me. No rope on it, either. So dad wrap rope 'roun' himself . . . dive in to get life belt. We drift farther and farther away in the waves . . . yes, he got life belt . . . water get so big and fierce . . . just make it over to me. I so happy. He held me up in his arms . . . while put life belt 'roun' me.

"Then we notice blood in the water. Lotsa blood. It my leg. Half it gone! Snapped off by rope . . . Snapped off! Bang! Snap . . . know what?" This, in response to Mein Host's grimace of pain. "Know what? I din even feel it happen . . . no, nothing!"

Another scratchy burst of onscreen machine guns seemed to be punctuating his story allowing him a theatrical pause while my ward waited anxiously to hear what happened then.

". . . so he tied his shirt tight 'roun' leg just above knee." He was gesturing at his right thigh, above the missing leg. "But, while this happen . . . he not see his rope come off. Next . . . not see boat. Big . . . bigger waves. Life belt not strong enough for both . . . we start to sink. . . ."

This was not going to end well. I saw Michael and Mein Host leaning closer to listen over Bonnie's shrill voice.

"Then Dad look me in my eyes . . . he said, 'My son, if your goin' to get through this . . . you goin' to hafta learn to relax . . . learn to relax . . .' An' he let go of life belt an' I never see my dad again. . . ." Tears were running down his handsome young face as the small ferry slapped through the fast-moving currents of the straits. It was Michael who broke the silence to ask the question that was hanging in the air.

“Still I don’ know.” The man’s look of bewilderment was genuine. “I musta gonta sleep or somethin’ . . . can’t remember anythin’ . . . then . . . I awake on a beach . . . forget again . . . next . . . awake in a hospital. . . .”

“But . . . how? How’d you get from here to there?” Michael asked again.

“I learn how to relax . . . I guess . . . but listen. Where I wash up . . . the beach . . . the island was ’bout three days far away where we fish . . . hundreds of miles . . . how could that happen? How could it happen?”

Neither man had an answer for that. Yet that phrase, “Son, if you’re going to survive, you’re going to have to learn to relax,” stayed with Mein Host, and he came to apply it in his own life in moments of extreme danger.

An example comes to me in which Mein Host, already in his sixties and living in New Mexico, driving alone in his Isuzu Trooper on a narrow two-lane highway and within the speed limit, hit an unexpected sheet of water on the road from a recent storm. The Isuzu started hydroplaning on the water, with my ward unable to control either the steering or the brakes. The SUV was moving steadily toward an approaching RV on the opposite side of the road.

I was proud and happy he’d learned his lesson well when I saw him simply lift his hands off the steering wheel and relax. He would describe it later as almost funny how the vehicle swung gracefully (and entirely mysteriously, because the steering wheel didn’t move) away from the RV, spinning the car and Mein Host around three times before depositing the Isuzu backward against a barbed-wire fence on the side of the road.

But here I am digressing again. Well, I did warn you—angels don’t have the best sense of sequential time. My observations in this case started with Mein Host’s unexpected discovery of the relaxed parasympathetic nervous system orgasm and a hint of something of the power of directed intention at the peak moments of physical pleasure. Here he is talking to a friend somewhat later in his life as to where this discovery has taken him.

“With passive sexuality the trick is to relax into the tension. Each time you feel the sexual tension building up, rather than giving in to it and following it through to orgasm, hard as that might be, just relax again. Allow, rather than push. Avoid forcing the energy the way you want it to go. Only at the moment of orgasm, only then, create a picture of your desired intention. It’s

important, too, to remember to align your desire with your higher intention.

When it came time to leave Morocco on one of his visits, I watched while Mein Host bought a kilo bag of kief in the depths of the Tangier souk from an ancient Arab he'd come to know and trust. One afternoon they had shared an unlikely camaraderie around glasses of mint tea, the old man filling the skuff —the tiny, clay pipe head that slips on the end of his sebsi, the long, thin, hardwood pipe—with the finest kief available. With that they'd settle back and enter into an almost telepathic rapport, as the old man's friends came, shared a pipe, and went about their business.

Late one afternoon a beautiful young man came into the small room with an Indian sitar. Old Mohammed's face crinkled in greeting, and he offered up his sebsi before introducing Mein Host to Marc Bolan. They shared a pipe together before Marc picked up the sitar and started strumming, the resonant vibrations of the sympathetic strings filling the room and making the candles flicker in time with the music. He was no Ravi Shankar, but he made a beautiful sound nonetheless.

They talked quietly when Marc put the instrument down carefully on a pillow beside him. They smoked another pipe before Marc gestured to Mein Host to pick up the sitar. To my ward's great surprise, he found himself settling uninstructed into the slightly awkward cross-legged position required for holding and playing the instrument correctly. The gourd resonating chamber nestled comfortably into the hollow of his left foot, and when he started plucking the strings it was as though he'd been playing the sitar all his life, although I knew he'd never played before in this lifetime.

Even Mohammed, the most reserved of men, appeared astonished as Mein Host's fingers slid easily over the wide, curved fretboard. Without having any conscious idea of what he was doing, he moved fluidly into a classical Indian evening raga. Marc, whose initial pique over Mein Host's apparently effortless facility with the instrument subsided, lay back, his eyes closed and a beatific smile on his sweet face, as the sustained notes of the raga shimmered in the fluttering light of the candles.

For Mein Host it was one of those puzzling events that were starting to occur with increasing frequency in his young life. For me, however, the moment carried a poignancy that would have been even more astonishing to

the young man than his ease with the instrument. He'd had some hints of reincarnation, but he was still too skeptical to accept past lives as a reality.

What he hadn't known was that in 1836 he'd been born into a poor family in Bengal and died fifty years later, having achieved *nirvikalpa samadhi*, a continuing state of God consciousness. When he was young, he was interested in the arts and had a natural ability with the sitar. Although he went to the village school, a vision he'd had as a boy moved him so deeply that he knew he was destined to devote his life to the Goddess.

He continued to play the sitar, becoming a popular entertainer in the small village, which was on one of the main pilgrimage routes to the festivals at the holy city of Puri. Meeting a constant stream of wandering renunciates and yogis, my ward, in his earlier incarnation, learned that Puri had more than a dozen big religious festivals a year, where he was called to sing the ancient Puranas. Before he was twenty years old he was appointed a priest of the Goddess Kali, and from then on he dedicated himself wholeheartedly to his devotions, yet to his regret he never played the sitar again.

As I was watching this unexpected interaction, which must have been orchestrated by Marc Bolan's angels, I found it extremely touching. Yet there was something else deeper going on that I now feel free to reveal, since Marc Bolan left his body more than thirty years ago.

Marc, who was born in 1947, was among the first wave of Watchers who incarnated into human vehicles, and, like many of his ilk, he knew only that he was different from other people. At the time he met Mein Host he was still in his late teens and was already a very confused young man. Nothing that was said in the course of the evening affected him that deeply, and he was never to understand exactly what happened. Because we angels keep in touch with human popular culture through the interests of our wards, I can tell you that this chance meeting in Tangier was the first inspiration for Marc Bolan's spate of songwriting, which appeared on the first album of Tyrannosaurus Rex.

Having bought a kilo of Mohammed's finest, Mein Host bored out small holes in the roll bars of his minivan and patiently filled them with kief, sealing the holes afterward with wax. It was going to be a long drive from Tangier to London, up through Spain and France, stopping off in Paris to collect some material for his mother's audiovisual business.

Soon after crossing into Spain from Gibraltar, the minivan's engine started faltering. When it finally failed on a deserted highway, Mein Host was fortunate that the car was on a slight incline, down which he was able to roll the vehicle. This unexpected malfunction introduced the unpleasant possibility of having to take the car—its roll bars full of kief—into a garage for repairs. But he wasn't going to let this happen: Mein Host resigned himself to keeping the ailing engine going, come what may.

Although kief was uneasily tolerated by the authorities in Morocco, cannabis was generally illegal in Europe, and smuggling it would likely bring a prison sentence in most of the countries. Mein Host's journey north with his ailing minivan was still a few years before the authorities began to crack down more seriously on drugs in general and started their ill-conceived "war on drugs." While being caught with kief in the minivan's roll bars would not be considered nearly as serious as it would now, the chance he would have to spend time in jail merely seemed to add spice to the trip.

By the time he reached Paris, he'd been maneuvering the car along for almost two days by means of toe-heeling the brake and the accelerator and jamming the accelerator with a rock to keep the engine running while refueling. Once he reached Paris, known for its aggressive drivers, the situation became an automotive nightmare for the lad: cars sped by within inches of crashing into the minivan, spilling kief all over the cobbles of the Place de la Concorde.

My heart went out to him. It wasn't going to be easy to park the car in this busy city while he ran up to collect the package for his mother. Although we don't generally do this unless asked, I prepared a parking space for him right outside his destination by distracting other drivers from noticing the open space.

Fortunately, the engine was still running when he returned to the car, even though he'd taken far longer upstairs than he'd intended and had also learned, to his dismay, that he'd have to check the material through a separate customs shed intended for commercial matter. This was not something Diana had warned him about, but then she was unaware of what was going to be in the roll bars.

Driving out of Paris, it started to pour. Sheets of rain accompanied the little van on the six-hour drive to Calais. Apart from being exhausted, not having

slept for almost three days, and after having to drive slowly, peering out of the windshield to guess which way the road was turning, it seemed to me that Mein Host was reaching a point beyond caring.

Only when he finally pulled into the customs shed, the car dripping wet and the rain still coming down outside in sheets, and got out to take the package to the officers inside the brightly lit office that the smell hit him. At least I assume it was the smell, because I saw his nose crinkling up just before a wave of fear passed through his emotional body. Evidently the rain and the warmth from the van's heater were combining to make the kief—hot, damp, and on the verge of fermenting—produce a cloud of sweet-smelling cannabis, which by now was surrounding the minivan. Worse still, his clothes, which he hadn't been able to change since leaving Tangier, had soaked up the overpowering aroma of the weed.

When the lad closed the door behind him, the brightly lit office was like a sauna. The officers must have turned up the heat for the first cold snap of the year. Handing over the package for inspection and waiting for the forms to be filled out, he couldn't help noticing four pairs of official French nostrils sniffing the air with slightly puzzled looks on their faces.

Standing as far away from the desk as possible and in schoolboy French, Mein Host pointed out the window at his minivan, its engine running, attempting to explain what happened to the car. I knew him well enough by now to know he was trying to distract the officials with charm and his self-effacing attempt to speak French from what must have been staring the uniformed officers in the nose.

How he managed to get out of that office with forms stamped, to climb back in the van and drive onto the waiting ferry, he never did understand. However, this incident and a couple of other similar ones stimulated a somewhat unexpected train of thought in the young man that I heard him expressing to Jean on returning to London.

"They must have smelled it," he was telling her while they were cleaning the kief out of the roll bars. "It was like a fog in that office. And they were looking at me all funny."

"Maybe they simply didn't recognize the smell," Jean said, laughing. When he'd arrived back the previous evening, clothes thick with stink, unshaven and utterly drained, she couldn't believe they'd let someone

through who was so obviously wasted.

“This has happened a few times now. Remember the hash? That was a kind of miracle, too. It’s got me thinking. I know it sounds odd, but somehow I feel like we’re being protected . . .”

“Meaning exactly what? Protected by whom?” Skeptical Jean wasn’t going to let that woolly claim get by.

“No, wait! Think about it. Those men were definitely smelling something. Even if they didn’t know the smell, why wouldn’t they’ve been curious?”

“Maybe you just smelled to them like a farmer who’d been rolling around in a haystack.”

“Seriously, Jean.” When they’d finished laughing at the haystack image, he said, “Something’s going on—I can feel it. Bear with me for a moment. I can’t quite explain it yet, but something seems to be smiling on us. It’s getting to be more than a coincidence, as if my way is being smoothed out.”

“Well, I don’t think we’re doing anything wrong. We don’t sell the kief—it’s just for our own use. Perhaps that makes the difference.”

“Right! I refuse to accept that I’m doing anything wrong just because some old farts in parliament get money from the alcohol industry! It’s not as if it’s heroin! No one is being harmed.”

Here the conversation changed as they swept out the last bits and pieces from the van. Yet this was the first time the thought entered Mein Host’s mind that something might be going on behind the scenes that directly affected him. It was as yet unformed, and he had no belief system to support the thought. The possibility that it might be angels, of course, still never entered his reasoning mind.

Nevertheless, as I saw it, it was a small but significant breakthrough.

If I describe some elements of a two-month journey the young lovers took through Europe in the summer of 1964 to live for six weeks in Turkey during the waning days of their relationship, it’s to examine the young man’s deepening intuition.

One aspect of Mein Host’s rebellious nature was to continue doing those things he felt he had the right as an autonomous person to do. Just as he persisted at school in cycling out of bounds to draw those Norman churches,

even though it was forbidden, he clearly believed that it was his right to alter his state of consciousness how and whenever he thought appropriate. He knew enough about the history of drugs to understand they had always confused and frightened people. These substances have always been controversial and misunderstood in Western society.

Although the English laws covering mind-altering substances were more lenient than the American ones, by the mid-1960s those in the alcohol-fueled English establishment were becoming threatened by the youthful revolution erupting all around them. As drugs have been frequently used to conveniently demonize certain segments of society, so also were they used to make an example of particular individuals. The 1967 arrests of Mick Jagger and Keith Richards on the most footling of drug charges and their absurdly severe sentences (although they were quickly overturned) were intended as a shot across the bow of the burgeoning counterculture.

The laws were so obviously being manipulated by a threatened old guard, men (almost entirely men) who didn't know the difference between an opiate and an entheogen. As I heard Mein Host say once to Jean when they were talking about how ridiculous the situation around substances was becoming. "They puff on their cigars and they drink their brandy—don't they know those are drugs too?!"

My ward didn't consider himself irresponsible and bad. No one had ever been hurt by his actions. Discovering and experimenting with entheogens before they became prohibited and knowing of their profound personal and social value if used wisely, he had little patience for the restrictions that were being imposed by the authorities.

Well before Mein Host was consciously aware of the presence of angels, I watched as he gradually familiarized himself with the higher realms of consciousness. Having spent so much time in Morocco, which at the time was a cannabis culture, he'd had the opportunity to observe and appreciate the way mature Muslim men handled the substance. For them it wasn't a question of getting falling-down stoned but of maintaining a subtlely altered state of consciousness by smoking tiny pipes of kief regularly throughout the day. Rather than getting high, it seemed to him, the Arabs knew how to maintain a balanced state of elevated consciousness.

With an aversion to alcohol, the result of the previously mentioned whisky

incident at Harrods, it was easy for him to appreciate the differences between alcohol and cannabis cultures. There was an ease and openness between fellow kief or hashish smokers, an effortless trust that emerges when people share the empathy produced by cannabis.

This was Mein Host's experience throughout the early 1960s. Over the course of his journeys through North Africa and the Middle East from 1959 to 1962, he'd invariably found himself welcomed into the homes of cannabis smokers. However, by the summer of 1964 the situation was already starting to change due largely to American pressure, and the customs officials at the various borders were becoming more vigilant and the laws in place regarding marijuana were being adhered to more strictly.

One afternoon in that summer of 1964, Jean and Mein Host were sitting in the back of a taxi in one of the more unkempt suburbs of Istanbul, waiting for the driver to return with the hashish he was buying for them. When the driver came back half an hour later than promised I could see it was unnerving for both of them. Although Turkey was still mainly a cannabis culture, the pressure to modernize had led to their laws on cannabis being extremely harsh. There was nothing the Turkish authorities liked better than to catch a couple of foreigners and make an example of them—and the pair would have been well aware Turkish jails were no fun.

However, they'd chosen their taxi driver well. As happened time and again in their dealings with their Arab friends, the man was completely trustworthy and showed up wreathed in happy smiles, this time to spill out more hash than either had ever seen in their life. Expecting to get a quarter of the amount for their money, enough now lay in their laps to keep them going for a whole year.

Thinking it wise to leave Istanbul that same day, the couple flew down to the coastal city of Izmir and then took a bus to the smaller town of Antalya. Arriving at night, they registered in a small local hotel and were given a room on the top floor of the three-story, battered, old structure. When they awoke in the early morning and drew back the heavy drapes, they found they were overlooking the two-story brick and stucco shops and houses of the town spreading out below them.

Mountains enclosed the small town, with the blue-green of the Gulf of Antalya fading into the southern horizon, but that wasn't what so astonished

them. Rearing up from the roof of each of scores of these small houses was a high chimney topped by an enormous nest, its edges cantilevered out at least a foot all the way around the chimney cap. In each nest sat one or two white storks—hundreds of storks, their long necks and golden beaks swaying in the sunlight just breaking over the mountains. When Jean slid open the crumbling wood windowframe, they could hear the arrhythmic clicking as pairs of storks entwined their necks and tapped each other's beaks.

Antalya was an ancient town, already more than three centuries old when St. Paul passed through on his first missionary journey before sailing to Antioch. Now Antalya has become a major Turkish resort town, but half a century ago Jean and my ward were overlooking a sleepy little fishing community.

Early one evening as the pair followed the narrow cobbled streets down to the water's edge, a group of local fishermen offered to take them out into the bay for sunset. The rowboat was large enough for six, with two of the men pulling hard on the oars. Communication at this point was largely through signs and gestures as the boat cut its way through the mirror-smooth water.

When the little town was fading into the surrounding mountains, the men had pulled up their oars and one of them drew a small block of hashish from his pocket. Soon a pipe was being passed around, and everyone on the boat relaxed back into an easy silence. Water lapped quietly against the side of the boat. A blood-red sun slowly slid beneath the horizon. The occasional honk of a car horn carried over the water.

Six people from very different cultures, without a shared language and few shared interests, found themselves drawn into a group mind in which no language was needed, everything was understood. I had no access to this level of mental activity, but I was able to feel from the state of their emotional bodies just how closely they'd bonded.

Mein Host opened his eyes at a slight shift in the boat to see a pot of Turkish coffee being brewed over a primus stove set on a wood platform at the bottom of the center of the boat. Taking the cue, he slipped one of the flat blocks of hashish they'd bought in Istanbul out from his shoe, stripped off the cellophane, and offered it to his new friends. This was evidently something completely unexpected in the fishermen's lives, because the boat started rocking dangerously as four large men were slapping their knees and roaring

with laughter.

It was pitch dark by the time they'd rowed back, but the evening was not to end yet. They were invited back to one of the men's houses, where the six of them sat on the floor around a table, nibbling on olives and tirmis, which, one of them explained, again with signs, were some sort of flower seeds that have been boiled. Candles were lit and placed on the table as the overhead neon bulb was switched off.

One of the older men reached back and pulled out a magnificent *narguileh* from a cupboard behind him. The water pipe had two long flexible tubes with carved amber mouthpieces. As he was cleaning out the delicate marble bowl, he was trying to explain with many gestures and grins how the pipe was usually used with tobacco, but because this was a special occasion . . . more smiles and laughter all around.

It only took three or four healthy pulls on the hoses before all six of them flowed back into the group mind experience they'd first felt on the boat but had melted away as they returned to land.

Once again I chose to step aside and not observe the proceedings, because I had no access to their group mind. What I can report is both the lovers agreeing, as they walked home with dawn breaking over the mountains, that it was the single longest telepathic link either of them had ever experienced.

"This was very different from when we fell into that copper's head, remember? Back in London?" Jean was laughing at the memory.

"Yeah! It wasn't scary to start with! It was so easy and relaxed."

"Language simply wasn't a problem. Same for you?" Jean asked.

"I didn't know if I was thinking in Turkish or they were thinking in English. It felt like language just dissolved. Hard to put into words. It's like another state of being."

"With the policeman it was like we were him for a few seconds," Jean was saying thoughtfully. "With these guys we were all one another. But I never lost my sense of self last night."

"Very different, right. Far more balanced. Also, that feeling we were all together—when we traveled I felt we were all moving together . . ."

Jean cut in: "Like we were in a boat together, except we were the boat as well!"

“I wonder . . .” Mein Host was the thoughtful one now. “I wonder, could being in the boat together earlier have created that sensation? Because it was like that, wasn’t it? I remember all of us taking off together . . .”

“Over the water, right? Over the bay?” They walked on, silenced, I felt, by the realization of how truly strange the encounter was—how a physical experience could set the stage for another more subtle reality.

“It frightened me to start with, but those guys were so kind. They knew exactly what they were doing—they pulled me back into the warmth. ”

“Same for me, Jeannie. During the telepathic time, when I was losing focus, I felt it, too—like being gently drawn back into the circle. I don’t know how they did it, but it was the first time I’ve ever felt anything like it.”

They walked on thoughtfully amid the morning clatter of shopkeepers lifting the metal gates to their shops and the tables and chairs being dragged out for the sidewalk cafés.

They were turning into the hotel entrance when I heard Mein Host say quietly as he opened the glass lobby door for his girlfriend, “All right, Jean. You were right. I honestly didn’t think it was real. But from what we experienced last night I know now telepathy really is possible for much longer periods. Not just a flash in the pan, like the copper. Although I suspect that what happened last night is rare enough.”

Picking up the key from the sleepy receptionist, they started up the staircase. On reaching the second-floor landing, Jean turned to hug Mein Host. They were both clearly exhausted and clung to each other for the last flight of stairs. Laughing, they fumbled the door open, threw themselves down on the bed, and were asleep within moments.

⁂

Böni proved correct in her intuition about Onya. The girl was a natural. The fandors, without exception, loved her as though she were one of them. Within a few weeks of that first meeting with Böni, Onya was spending more time with the birds than on her other studies.

As she was playing early one morning with a couple of the young adult birds, she found herself quite naturally climbing onto one of their broad, soft backs. After the fandor’s initial surprise at the unaccustomed weight, the bird

twisted her long neck around to fix Onya with a single placid eye. Once again the girl felt the spreading warmth in her emotional body as the fandor empathically projected her pleasure.

After that welcome, it wasn't long before the fandor was taking short flights carrying Onya on her back. Still unsure as to the true motives of the girl, there'd been some clucking from the older birds after they'd seen the pair soaring overhead. Fortunately, this disapproval was short-lived when each of the birds had a chance to carry the girl. It was obvious that they, too, thoroughly enjoyed the sensation.

There were seldom more than half a dozen fandors in the city at any one time, yet after each one had finally flown with Onya, for the first time far larger numbers of the birds began arriving for the experience, and then leaving to be immediately replaced by another bird floating in over the ocean from the southwest. This quick change of opinion among the resident birds, and their call for others to join them, was puzzling Onya until she realized it was something inside her to which the birds must be responding. All she knew about this was the profound feeling of love she had for the fandors and the comfort she felt while being with them.

Böni had been watching this unusual progression from the sidelines with mounting interest. It had been almost 275,000 years since the staff had arrived on the planet and set up their city and some 23,000 years since the fandors had started cautiously approaching the place. In all that time neither Böni nor any of the other staff had ever seen anyone being carried on the back of a fandor. There had been a few humans whom the birds appeared to accept over the years, which is how they were known to be semi-telepathic, but they'd never allowed a single person the intimacy of a ride perched on their backs. Not until Onya.

This was to launch a new relationship between human beings and fandors, nurtured in the city over the years by Böni and Onya and her growing number of apprentices. Keep in mind that the birds were able to bond so closely with mortals only—not with any of the Prince's staff, not with the midwayers, and, sadly, not with Böni, the one most hopeful, and the one who ultimately became the most resentful.

This raises a point that had long concerned the Prince's staff. These one

hundred individuals can be best understood as mortals who've lived full lifetimes in the worlds of their birth, who have then died and ascended through the seven subsequent planes, or "lifetimes," to arrive on the capital planet of this System . . . and only then do they volunteer for this mission.

The motives of all these volunteers for choosing the challenge of returning to a primitive planet were wildly varied: some sought redemption, some a sexual love they'd never known; others simply desired power, and still others were convinced of their own power to do good. What has surprised many of those who've recently come to examine the files on this matter is how the final choice of the hundred appeared to favor those whose reasons for volunteering were—How shall we say?—somewhat murky. As both Prince Caligastia and his chief of staff, Daligastia, appeared to have been chosen for their independent thinking, among their many noble attributes, so also were the staff evidently selected for rather more complex reasons than were noticed initially.

Yet none of this seemed significant at the time. Those chosen for the mission were wonderfully intelligent, superbly trained, and each had the conscious memory of seven "lifetimes" behind them. They would have become aware of the Indwelling God and the Father Spirit during their ascension process and from their time spent in the System Capital, so it was a matter of some surprise to be informed they'd be leaving their Atmans behind. They were all reassured that they would be reunited with their individual Atmans on the completion of their mission.

I realize this might sound strange to contemporary ears, because for most humans the concept of being indwelt by God is not a familiar, or an experiential, reality. Most people appear to go about their entire lives without any awareness of the indwelling God, and organized religion, on the whole, emphasizes God as "being out there somewhere." Yet for us angels, as well as for some of the simpler of a world's intelligent creatures, even if we can't perceive the Atman, we can feel Its Presence within humans.

Recently, as all angels have been encouraged to examine and learn from every aspect of the rebellion—its causes and consequences—some attention has been focused on the reasons offered for sending off the staff without their Atmans. Was it, as MA maintained, simply because the Atmans had no need to repeat what were frequently the painful experiences of accompanying

mortals through their lifetimes? Or was it, as some are now suggesting, a subtle way of laying the groundwork for an anticipated future uprising?

Over the years the fandors had been coming and going from the city, Böni had come to realize that the birds were only prepared to tolerate the intimate company of humans. This was confusing for Böni's council, because they'd assumed their companions—the hundred mortals from whom the staff were cloned—would have been able to establish close ties with the fandors. But this was never to be. Whether it was the companions' very human desire to identify more closely with the staff by making a point of *not* flying with the fandors, or if it was the fandors' collective caution regarding contact with all but the truly indigenous mortals, the companions had a tendency to set themselves above the humans who came for fandor training.

In spite of all this posturing among the lower ranks, Böni and her council staff had long harbored hopes that as the fandors came to trust them, they, too, would be welcomed to fly with them. As the centuries passed, this hope had developed into an obsession. Yet, as the fandors continued to come and go, leaving their mysterious translucent globes, there appeared to be no softening in the birds' indifference to the staff. And now this little creature, Onya, was making the breakthrough Böni had so much coveted ever since first seeing the fandors! I could see from Böni's emotional body that it infuriated her, even though she tried her best to keep it hidden from the council.

Despite this, there were times I overheard Böni vigorously complaining about the unfairness of it to a couple of trusted colleagues. Long after Onya had died, and after many generations of fandor riders had come and gone, Böni was known for adopting a particularly sarcastic tone when speaking about those humans the fandors adopted as their riders. She called them maladapted, and sometimes even mentally retarded, conflating an empathic simplicity of mind with signs of idiocy in her envious dismissal of their rare gift.

I believe that these harsh attitudes were the result of Onya's unfortunate death. Despite all warnings, Böni had evidently fallen into the trap of becoming sentimentally overattached to a human being. So, when Onya disappeared one day while riding a fandor who was particularly devoted to

her, and then didn’t reappear by sundown, her mentor was concerned enough to send a couple of midwayers out to find her. Perhaps she’d have done better not to have known what happened, because when the midwayers returned with the sad news, Böni started on what was to become a long, downward spiral.

The fandors had killed and consumed Onya’s heart and brain, before ceremoniously laying her remains on a snowcapped peak, sacred to them, in the Atlas Mountains. And herein, too, lay the paradox that so tortured Böni. The fandors had sacrificed Onya out of love and supreme respect, and they had consumed her organs to become closer to her.

“The birds are vegetarians, Caligastia,” Böni said, near hysteria. “Fandors aren’t meant to eat people! They never have. What am I going to do?”

“Watch out for your emotions, woman!” The Prince could be stern with his staff. “It’s your responsibility for getting so involved with the girl. Listen, those fandors didn’t kill and eat the girl out of greed or malice but out of the best intentions. You know there’s nothing we can do about that.”

Böni never recovered from Onya’s death, so when the rebellion broke out, it was her voice that was often loudest among the complaints about MA’s brutal indifference to the real conditions of life on the planet.

Indeed, when the rebellion did blow up some millennia later, and the choice to remain loyal to their mission or to align with their Planetary Prince was presented both to the staff and their companions, Böni was still nursing the grudge. She cited this unfair preference the fandors exhibited for mortals as just another example of how humans were regarded as more important than the staff!

“We are the immortals! We should be allowed all the privileges, and yet it’s these wretched humans who get the perks! We’re expected to do this job, but this makes us look like fools!” Böni’s passionate speeches carried the day, with most of the staff involved with animal husbandry among the first of the sixty staff to defect and align themselves with their Prince.

Others of the staff also had their complaints. Luta and her colleagues at the Board of Health turned out to have been suppressing their frustration with the “almost impossible conditions” they were having to deal with every day as well as the “arbitrary limitations” placed on them in their ability to cure and

heal the natives. Many a new strain of virus had already appeared among the natives, often decimating populations and over which the council had no control. Not being permitted to use medical techniques too far in advance of planetary culture, Luta and her colleagues frequently found themselves powerless to prevent such widespread suffering and death. They claimed loudly that it was an insult to their calling.

Luta, in particular, determinedly expressed the belief that she could be of far more value if she were only allowed to accelerate the pace of medical research and applied technology. This argument also persuaded Nodu and her entire Council on Industry and Trade to follow Caligastia on his promise to permit unlimited technological progress. With Tuta, and her commission on tribal government, their grievance had more to do with their constant frustration at the lack of social progress. They blamed the natives' instinctive fear of change and their terror at any innovation that challenged their superstitious traditions. This obstructionist resistance to the staff 's counsel was also the seat of Tuta's anger at seeing so much of her careful diplomacy constantly thwarted by uncontrollable tribal violence.

Others among the staff were simply unable to comprehend that their superiors—these shining, brilliant, Descending Sons at the helm of the mission—might be guiding them in a wrong direction.

"Surely a System Sovereign and a Planetary Prince must know what's really happening behind the scenes—they must know something we don't." I heard this sort of comment whispered around the city during the seven lunar years in which rebel and loyalist alike nervously awaited the decision of the recently replaced System Sovereign as to their fate.

By this point it was known that at least half the administrators and the transition angels assigned to this world, of which I count myself one, were aligning with Lucifer and the rebels. Of the hundred humans who had contributed their bioplasm, a surprising majority stayed faithful to Vanu, the member of the staff who emerged as the leader of the forty who opposed Prince Caligastia's support of Lucifer and Satan.

It was a nervous time indeed. We were all on edge as different members of the staff stood in the central plaza arguing their case for or against the principles of the Lucifer Rebellion—some pleading for loyalty to MA's time-tested methods of planetary upliftment; others advocating just as vociferously

for their policy of enlightened self-government, free of the stern and arbitrary oversight of MA.

There was this powerful sense so many of us were feeling that we were wasting our time and energy, that we could do a great deal better on our own than under MA's yoke. Yet I don't believe any of us expected what the Prince would do next.

The arrogance of Caligastia's claim to be God of this world horrified some of the staff, while his supporters insisted on how much more effectively they could control the natives if their Prince was accepted and worshipped as the great God. Since the staff had already found that the fear of God was an effective tool for prodding recalcitrant natives, the Prince emphasized how much more could be achieved with a real living God present on Earth.

So the situation stood, the energies in the city swinging wildly from one extreme to another during this tumultuous period. There was tremendous excitement among the rebels. We all felt it. We were being swept along on a splendid new enterprise. Some even talked openly of being encouraged by the Mother Spirit to take this radical action. This was something I'd felt at the time but had never really spoken about since. While it was happening, when we were hearing that reassuring Voice, we tended to dismiss those unable to hear the Voice as perhaps being less spiritually advanced, just as they, in turn, accused us of being deluded or fraudulent in our claims.

This seven-year period of waiting drew to an end when all those involved with the mission made their choice clear as to whether to follow Prince Caligastia or remain true to MA and the original mission statement. It was the most important decision any of us would ever make.

I should make it clear that because Lucifer was the System Sovereign, the rebellion he inspired occurred mainly on Jerusem, the capital planet of the System. In this way the conflict on Jerusem was relatively short-lived, effectively ending when Lucifer was deposed and replaced by Lanaforge as System Sovereign. However, the real effects and consequences of the rebellion were far longer-lasting and affected the thirty-seven planets that aligned with the rebels in ways that sill reverberate to this day.

Even before the Prince's arrival, this world was known to be particularly difficult, and in spite of the staff's efforts during the almost 300,000 years prior to the rebellion, progress had never been rapid or rewarding.

I sometimes think that a revolution was inevitable, for even I could feel that trouble was brewing under the surface. Something had to burst. I admit it, the rebellion seemed like a supreme blessing at the time, a stroke from heaven; it was something entirely different, a chance to finally get it right—for the staff to be able to have a free hand in accelerating the upliftment process. Most of us found it all too easy to go with the flow.

It wasn't until the final ruling came down from Lanaforge that the true reality of what we'd managed to get ourselves into dawned on us.

* * *

The six weeks Jean and Mein Host spent in Turkey, enjoyable as they'd been, ended up being a turning point for both of them. Jean had recently met and started to fall in love with an American photographer on one of her modeling trips to New York. I could see from her emotional body that she had decided to marry the photographer.

Mein Host knew nothing about this and was having his own somewhat humbling insights. One of the boy's ambitions at the age of twenty-four was to become a writer, and one the the issues he wanted to settle during their time in Turkey was to see whether he had any gift for it. And try he did. He set aside a regular time each afternoon to sit at the table in their hotel room and write. And write. But at the end of the first month, with copious pages covered in his handwriting, he was forced to be honest with himself. He was twenty-four years old, and he had nothing to write about—nothing interesting or original to say.

"Like a man," I heard him say to Jean, "walking down a street catching a glimpse of his image in shop windows, all I could write about was a reflection of myself—flickering images with no depth."

Yet an even more influential insight awaited him as they made their way home.

Stopping off for a few days in Istanbul before catching the Orient Express back to Paris, they found a cheap hotel in the older part of town. Early one evening, after the pair returned from wandering through the glorious Blue Mosque and were relaxing on the bed of their tiny room, they had their final smoke of the Turkish hashish before catching the train.

Once again, having no access to Mein Host's mind, all I can do to assess the value of an insight or a revelation is to infer it from the state of the lad's emotional body. In this case the insight was a remarkably powerful one, which he expressed to Jean later as "a clarity I've never felt before—that whatever it is I'm looking for is actually back in London. I've gone all over—India, Morocco, Persia, all over Europe, now Turkey. . . . I know I've been trying to find something that'll explain how that snake could burrow into me through my eye."

Jean, who may well have been thinking of her own situation and how she was going to handle herself when her new relationship came to light, remained thoughtfully silent.

"I have no idea what to expect when we get back to London," Mein Host continued, "but that was one of the clearest and most powerful experiences I've ever had! Whatever it means, I know something important's going to happen!"

And indeed it did, within a few weeks of returning, and in a manner the bookish young man was unlikely to ignore.

We already know of his passion for reading and his pride in his growing library, as well as the short-lived relationship with Jennifer that ended his book-stealing days, so perhaps it isn't surprising that the next act in this modest drama would take place in yet another bookshop.

Mein Host has already described this event in one of his books, but of course he couldn't have been aware of what I perceived. From his point of view, the incident was as simple as it was mysterious. Wandering slowly down one of the narrow aisles of a bookshop in Notting Hill Gate, a large hardback volume fell from a crowded top shelf, an edge of the book striking my ward firmly and painfully on the head.

I was happy to see that he had the good sense to buy the book. It was Idris Shah's chronicle of the impact of Sufism on Western thought. *The Sufis* was published in 1964 by Doubleday, with the support of Robert Graves, and included Graves's long and enthusiastic introduction. However, what Mein Host was unable to see was what I call a clever piece of midwayer sleight of mind. Not that I actually saw anything, either. But that top shelf was tightly packed with large books at one moment; the very next this heavy volume seemed to launch itself off the shelf.

It was delightfully baffling for my ward, and yet it was impossible not to recognize something of a divine humor to it. Had the lad been more clairaudient at the time, he might have even heard us laughing in the wings.

A few days later he was alone in his room in the apartment he shared with his five friends. It was late at night, and he was reading in bed after a long day at the architectural office where he was working to complete the seven-year training and fulfill the final requirement for his diploma. Still basically a skeptic, especially of any organized religion or system of worship, he'd developed a certain affinity for Sufism over the years of his searching. It won't surprise him to learn now that this, too, stemmed from the same prior Bengali incarnation already mentioned.

Some thirty pages into Idris Shah's book, he must have reached a paragraph that stopped him in his tracks. His mental and emotional bodies were strobing wildly as he sat rigidly in his bed. A couple of hours later he managed to get to sleep. The next day, when I heard him talking on the phone to Jean, I discovered what had so moved him.

Having successfully put Mary Ann and Robert out his mind for two years, hardly ever speaking about them and his friends who'd joined them in Compulsions Analysis, here they were again. In the paragraph that had jolted Mein Host so wide awake, Idris Shah was writing about a tactic in which Sufi teachers will sometimes disguise themselves so only those with sufficient spiritual awareness would recognize them.

"When I read that, I felt my brain exploding," he said to Jean on the phone, trying to explain what had happened. "The thought came out of nowhere. I just knew I'd screwed up. I realized that Mary Ann and Robert really are my Sufi teachers. I saw how I got caught up in their disguises, and that made me reject them. I've been such an idiot."

Jean was having none of it. Since she'd met Mein Host within a week of his walking out on Mary Ann and Robert two years earlier, the little she had heard of Compulsions Analysis had not impressed her. The situation might have remained there, the revelation that so moved him might have faded away over time, had not the third key in the locked door of Mein Host's destiny turned within days of his Idris Shah–inspired insight.

As seldom as he talked about his old friends at Compulsions Analysis, he

had never once in all those two years seen or heard from any one of them. He believed they'd forgotten about him every bit as much as he'd tried to put them out of his mind.

Yet here he was walking on Wigmore Street again, on the opposite sidewalk this time from his encounter five years earlier with the ET who could pick the rockets out of the sky, when there was his friend Richard, the young man with whom he'd traveled to India and back, walking toward him with a big, welcoming smile on his face. Mein Host's quarrel had never been with his friend, so they settled into a pleasant catch-up conversation in a local coffeehouse.

He was clearly surprised to hear Richard saying how Compulsions Analysis had flourished since he'd been away. No longer was it half a dozen friends sitting around in each other's kitchens, but Mary Ann and Robert had rented a large, posh apartment at the fashionable end of Wigmore Street, just around the corner from Harley Street. They were giving regular E-meter sessions to dozens of people and were running what they called a Communication Course two evenings a week for forty to fifty people.

Mein Host hadn't seen Richard since they'd returned from a summer exploring Morocco together almost three years earlier, and there were a lot of memories to be shared.

"That time we were kidnapped—remember that?"

"How could I forget it!" Mein Host was laughing. "It was an amiable kidnapping, but I still can't look at a plate of couscous without feeling sick!"

They'd been traveling by local bus through the Atlas Mountains, winding down toward Ouarzazate, when a group of young Berbers who had befriended them on the trip invited the pair back to their home. What they weren't to discover until many hours later was that "home" lay at the end of a twenty-mile walk at the bottom of a narrow gorge in the heat of the day. Arriving at the little village of a dozen adobe dwellings built into the steep valley wall, they were steered onto the roof of one of the houses and fed bowls of couscous before they collapsed, exhausted, for the night.

The first few days were a delight. Their hosts were kind and intensely proud to have Europeans staying with them. They were poor and simple people, yet three times a day a large bowl of couscous, unadulterated by any

discernible seasoning, was delivered up to the roof along with a new group of villagers who'd come to watch the lads eat.

Soon it became obvious that they were being used, innocently enough, as status symbols. For the next six days, by means of a variety of stratagems—the truck broke down, the river flooded, there are bandits on the path, we can't spare the guides—their hosts, in league with the villagers, managed to keep the young Englishmen virtual prisoners, before they finally were persuaded to arrange for their return.

"Amiable enough, as kidnappings go," Mein Host said again. They were both laughing now. "But I still loathe couscous!"

They parted good friends having genuinely enjoyed seeing each other. Mein Host was still deeply suspicious of Mary Ann, and in spite of the synchronicities that seemed to lead back to the woman, she was the last person he consciously ever wanted to see again. He'd made that quite clear to Jean.

Then Richard called him on the phone. They were all thrilled—Mary Ann and Robert especially—to have heard from him again. They'd all be delighted if Mein Host would come around for afternoon tea at their smart new apartment. Mary Ann had something important to discuss with him. She could only discuss it with him.

Despite Jean's wise protestations, like many a young man of his background and generation, Mein Host was vulnerable to flattery and being needed—especially by a strong woman. This impulse, together with a perfectly natural curiosity to see what had become of what he'd had a hand in starting, as well as a somewhat misplaced confidence in his own detachment, were enough to convince him to go.

I didn't like what I saw happening, but I couldn't deny that there was a certain purposeful direction starting to manifest in Mein Host's life. Companion angels tend to focus on guiding their wards toward the experiences they need to grow in spirit, even if those experiences are difficult and challenging. I could see from the synchronicities they'd arranged so far that my ward's companion angels appeared to be supporting this new development in his life. As a Watcher, however, with such a personal interest in my ward, I wondered whether his angels were leading him into the lioness's den. Being compassionate by nature, we Watchers find it hard to

comprehend why humans so frequently need to suffer in order to become wise and learn compassion for themselves.

Besides, I wouldn't have been able to steer him away from going to tea with Robert and Mary Ann—even if I'd wanted to. This would be a meeting that was to change his life.

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None of us in the city waiting anxiously for the proclamation from Lanaforge could have anticipated the consequences.

Although it was generally known that there'd been a couple of previous rebellions in this Local Universe, detailed information on them wasn't made available, and the uprisings were used mainly as cautionary warnings in the sociology courses at the Melchizedek universities.

Unbeknownst to us at the time, there were a small but growing number of Melchizedek instructors who were proposing the revolutionary theory that angelic rebellions were becoming a necessary evil. In a well-run and benign Local Universe, they argued, having as many as three rebellions must surely suggest they carry far more levels of meaning than originally believed. The Melchizedek Council has long held that the balance of the good, which can be ultimately reaped from the many repercussions of a rebellion, far outweighs the evil done in that rebellion's name. I had heard from another Watcher, so I can't guarantee its veracity, that a smaller group took the more provocative stance that rebellions, however unpleasant for all concerned, have their valuable place in the overall management of the Multiverse.

While not actively supporting rebellions, this group maintained that it was preferable to regard them as a necessary counterbalance to the endlessly smooth operation of Multiverse affairs. Interestingly enough, although I wasn't to hear it until much later, this group of Melchizedek were also predicting many more revolutions in the future, as this long Multiverse cycle draws to a close. Some even went as far as to theorize that angelic uprisings and the subsequent systemwide quarantines that are invariably put into place create the appropriately challenging planetary conditions to toughen up the volunteers for the next major mission—although I've heard only rumors as to what that next major mission might be.

None of this philosophizing, however, would have mattered one bit to us.

We were full of righteous energy, convinced that we were going to create a whole new society. When the news came down that this world, along with this entire System of planets, was to be quarantined, we welcomed it. We applauded our isolation. Finally, it would allow us to put Caligastia's plans into action for far higher levels of individual freedom for the staff, for the midwayers, and for the humans. The isolation wasn't going to affect those of us Watchers as much as the others, especially the sixty staff aligned with the Prince, all of whom I knew could barely wait to practice their newfound freedoms.

We had often heard Caligastia declaiming outside the central Temple, speaking through Nodu or Luta or another of his followers, on the value of personal responsibility. They'd openly accuse Vanu and the loyalists of being dupes of a paternalistic bureaucracy—a "nanny state," as Nodu might have called it. They demanded to know how the natives were ever going to grow up if members of the staff were always there to protect them. They charged the loyalists with deliberately fostering unnecessarily high levels of codependency with human beings, insulting them even further by sneeringly suggesting the cause of this was the staff 's own codependency on their superiors. Nodu seemed to particularly relish calling them cowards, loyalist patsies who were incapable of making decisions for themselves.

"And how do you think you got this way?!" Nodu would challenge them rhetorically. "Can't you see that you've lost your edge? It's been yes sir/no sir for so long you've forgotten who you are. At this rate we'll be stuck on the planet forever."

It was a convincing message for many of us.

10

The Birth of a Mystery School

Harsh Awakenings, Prince Caligastia's Vision, Melchizedek Receivers, Atlantean Incarnations, and "As Below, so Above"

Mein Host arrived promptly at 4 p.m. at the smart apartment block on Wigmore Street and took the mirrored and gold-trim elevator up to the fourth floor. It was one of those buildings thrown up after the war, of an indistinct architectural style tending toward the faux-Georgian, designed to appear solid and respectable.

He was greeted enthusiastically by Richard again and guided into the large living room of Mary Ann and Robert's new professional space. Half a dozen of his old friends and a couple of men he didn't know were gathered around a glass-topped table and rose to their feet as Mein Host entered. Mary Ann and Robert, sitting at either side of the table on the only large armchairs in the room, did not get up.

With tall French windows that opened onto a narrow balcony overlooking Wigmore Street, the room ran the length of the apartment. Apart from the two armchairs and the coffee table, the space was open and free of furniture. A stack of brown metal folding chairs leaned against the far wall. The crosshatched parquet oak floor was highly polished, and the walls, free of any decoration, were a newly painted, sparkling white.

After all the introductions and reintroductions were made, it appeared that everyone was pleased and happy to see him. Robert was perhaps the dearest of his old friends, and they both greeted each other effusively. Some of the others were a little more cautious, and I could see they were waiting to see how Mary Ann would welcome him. When she reached up to embrace my ward, there was a discernible easing in the emotional atmosphere.

Mein Host was finding his place on the floor when coffee was brought in on a tray by Juliette, another of his old friends, and the cups were spread out

on the table. As the small talk swirled and eddied around him, I could feel his excitement, although he was masking it under a sensible reserve. He'd told Jean more than once, and Richard on the phone, that he had absolutely no interest in rejoining the group. He was just going there to see the lay of the land.

Soon it emerged that the meeting had an altogether different purpose—at least in Mary Ann's mind. Signaling to Robert to unfurl a roll of architectural blueprints and the others to push their cups aside, she smoothed out the ground-floor plan of a large building before leaning back in her chair and smiling proudly down at Mein Host.

"If you're impressed by this place," she gestured around the spacious living room, "wait 'til you see where we're going to be next!" She sounded triumphant.

Mein Host had not been overly impressed by the new quarters but was wise enough to ignore her comment as blueprints of elevations, sections, and all six floor plans were laid out one on top of another.

"This is going to be our new headquarters," Mary Ann again said proudly. "In the heart of Mayfair, just behind Park Lane. It's perfectly placed."

Looking more carefully at the plans, Mein Host could see that some work had already been done on them. There were a few cautious lines here and there. Not quite sure why this was happening and what he was looking at, Mary Ann answered his unasked question. She would often do that.

"Paul's been working on the designs forever. And they're awful. Look. Look at them! They're boring!" Her voice took on a cutting edge all too familiar to him from his argument with her two years earlier, but it was aimed at Paul this time.

"You just don't get it, do you, Paul? I ask you to do a simple thing and weeks later you come back and you still haven't got it right. Are you stupid? Can't you understand what I'm telling you?!" All this and more from Mary Ann, flicking the ash from her cigarette contemptuously onto the top floor plan, where Mary Ann and Robert were planning to live.

Mein Host, who had been studying the plans for the top apartment during this tirade, waited for her to pause and then tentatively suggested a solution, in this case to put in a glass-brick floor over the splendid stairwell, which

apparently had never occurred to Paul.

There was a silence while everybody around the table, and Robert who was now up from his chair, crowded closer to look at the floor plan.

“This way you get the best of all possible worlds.” Mein Host was talking while quickly sketching out his idea. “It filters the soft light from the roof skylight into the stairwell. It’ll look great at night—from both sides—and, see, if we dropped light globes on long leads suspended from the glass floor . . .” His hand was busy drawing a perspective view up into the stairwell. “We can bring the globes down in a spiral that echoes the doglegging of the stairs, understand? That way they’ll give the best light for each stretch of the stairs, but it won’t be too obvious. . . .”

“You see! You see?” Mary Ann broke in, turning to glare at Paul again. “He’s got the answer just like that. Why couldn’t you have thought of that? It’s so obvious that I could have come up with it!” There was more of this invective too tedious and acidic to report.

Had not Mein Host felt so flattered by her approval, he might have been able to gain some insight into the way Mary Ann worked with her power to manipulate people. He could well have asked himself from the abuse she was hurling at Paul whether she was using him to humiliate the man for more than just a lack of architectural imagination. But he was either too happy for his solution to be accepted, or relieved not to be on the other end of Mary Ann’s vituperation, he learned nothing of value from her display.

Poor Paul. I saw him flinch as if she’d struck him, and then his face turned bright red as Mary Ann continued to berate and belittle him. Mein Host, evidently unable to look over at Paul, focused his attention even more closely on the plans before him.

Paul was a tall, upright, kindly young man of Germanic heritage, boarding school educated and intelligent, but he tended to be self-deprecating by nature. Like Robert and Richard, he, too, had been at architectural college with my ward and the two knew each other well without being particularly close. Paul was a few years older than my ward, and, like Robert, he’d done his spell in the British Army, but this had done little to dent his natural reticence.

Knowing Paul and watching his design work for seven years at college

together, my ward was aware of his friend's limitations. Paul was a decent enough architect, but as a creative designer he'd never shown much imagination. Now it sounded as though he'd been given this big project and was steadily grinding it into the ground.

When Mary Ann finished castigating Paul, she turned her green eyes on Mein Host, seeking an implicit agreement about his friend's lack of inspiration. Unable to avoid her piercing gaze and equally aware by this time of where the conversation was going, I could feel him wrestling with himself. He had no wish to betray a friend; on the other hand, it sounded like he was being offered the job of his young life.

He needn't have been concerned. Mary Ann evidently had already made up her mind to turn over all the interior design work on this six-floor mansion to Mein Host, and she was offering to give him a free hand creatively.

Of course, the lad was honored. Who wouldn't be? Although he'd worked on other architects' projects, he'd never had such a large job of his own involving so much interior design. To have someone eager to give him work clearly outweighed any reservations he might have had. His very first project! His mother would be sure to be proud of him. She was aware of how bored her son had been getting with slogging away on detail drawings for other architects, and though she had no great liking for Mary Ann, she wanted even more for her son to take up a career in architecture, and this, she told him, would be a good start. As long as by taking on the project he didn't "fall back into Mary Ann's clutches" is the way she expressed it when they were discussing the offer afterward.

Mary Ann, in her turn, seemed to have forgotten their last ferocious contretemps—nothing was said about it and the woman was at her most emotionally seductive. She assured him that it wasn't about his rejoining them—no, no, nothing like that. She just really really wanted him to take over the contract. She wanted his design savvy, his brilliance, etc., etc.

I need to cut in here because this is one of those times when I could perceive a level of what was happening in that room to which Mein Host was almost completely blind. From his conversation with Jean at dinner later in the evening, it was obvious that he knew he was flying very close to the flame. Yet he didn't agree **t**hat he was walking into a trap, as Jean believed. I certainly had my own doubts at the time about his ability to resist Mary Ann

after seeing her at work.

Three weeks into the design process, including fruitful weekly meetings with his new clients, Mary Ann tipped her hand. Believing it would be essential for his understanding of the uses they were going to make of the large main room of the mansion, she insisted that Mein Host join them for the biweekly Communication Course that she and Robert were running out of their Wigmore Street apartment. Not an unreasonable request: if he were designing a sports stadium, he'd have been wise to watch some of the games that were to be played there. But this was a different situation.

Since there seemed to be developing a mutual agreement not to touch on the terrible argument that had driven Mein Host away two years before, he had evidently convinced himself that he could be an objective observer at their Communication Course and agreed to attend without a second thought.

When I have talked previously of Mein Host's emotional immaturity, I believe the succession of choices he made as a consequence of this one simple professional decision to attend the course illustrates both his lack of self-knowledge and his schoolboy's lack of awareness as to how vulnerable he would be to the wiles of a powerful woman.

Because, of course, Mary Ann had certainly not forgotten about the argument and the terrible things he'd accused her of. And she certainly hadn't overlooked his comment about her neck on their first meeting, either. Mary Ann was never a woman to easily forget—or forgive.

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Even before MA's ruling on the Systemwide quarantine finally made itself felt, Vanu and the other thirty-nine staff—along with fifty-six of their modified companions, all of whom remained faithful to the old ways, together with less than ten thousand midwayers—had already relocated a few miles outside the city walls.

Caligastia and his fellow travelers, under the general leadership of Nodu, took over the city and quickly started to spread news of the new freedoms among the surrounding tribes. It was an exciting time, and we could see the immediate fruits of liberation in the way some tribes surged ahead.

After a couple of years, Vanu and the so-called loyalists were forced to move even farther away, but they still needed to visit the city and eat their

ration of the leaves and fruit of the remarkable shrub that was sustaining their immortality. They would have liked to have taken the sacred plant with them, but they were afraid it would die if they tried transplanting it under such uncertain conditions. This led to a situation that I can only describe as absurd.

While the city was firmly in Caligastia's hands, the shrub and the Temple were not. All through those seven uncertain years, a small group of loyalist angels and midwayers defended the shrub from the rebel staff, allowing only Vanu's loyal staff and companions through for their rations. This soon became irrelevant at the point when MA shut down the incoming cosmic frequencies, thus condemning all hundred staff and their modified companions to ultimate mortality. Yet, for a while it created a laughably incongruous sight.

Every few days, Vanu and his thirty-nine staff members, together with their seventy-two modified companions, would troop into the city to find themselves making their way toward the Temple between long lines of Caligastia's faithful followers. The recently introduced permissiveness was just starting to take hold under the new order, so some of the sights that members of Vanu's group were bound to see as they hurried onward, and from which they desperately tried to avert their eyes, they found both horrifying and fascinating.

Clothing standards were the first to change (or deteriorate according to one viewpoint), as Caligastia's emphasis on individual freedom was encouraging unexpected acts of exhibitionism. Gone were the sober, single-color robes of the prior regime, replaced by clothes of every shape and color, and, more embarrassing still to the conservative loyalists, large expanses of flesh were now clearly (and temptingly) visible.

There were changes, too, in the Seraphic Over-government, although "government" isn't quite the right word. They have little to do with governing human beings, their function being to coordinate the vast number of angels working on the planet at any one time, whether they are companion angels, or the angels of technology, or the angels of the churches.

We heard that twelve Melchizedek Receivers had arrived, as we knew they were required to do on all defaulting planets, to advise the Seraphic Over-government in such times of transition. As I mentioned, the Over-government has almost nothing directly to do with individual humans, but at times of

great upheaval, as with a System-wide rebellion, Melchizedek Receivers are sent to join that planet's Seraphic Over-government in reorganizing the angels. I imagine, for example, it will have been these Melchizedek Receivers who probably decided to keep the likes of me present on the planet, while exiling many others of my kind for their support of the rebel faction.

Everything seemed to be moving along extremely fast. We hadn't seen Vanu or any of his group for months, and neither the Temple nor the sacred shrub appeared to be safeguarded any longer. We finally held the city and all the surrounding area, but as the years passed we realized we had become increasingly isolated from the real power center of the planet. It was only later that we discovered that the Melchizedek were supporting Vanu and his followers, who had by this time established their settlement in the mountains close to the Indian border to separate themselves from Caligastia's "baleful influence" (their words).

Then, shortly after we found this out, we heard that all thirty-nine staff who had remained with Vanu were being quietly returned to Jerusem to be reunited with their Atmans. Their job was apparently over.

This news was worthy of a mighty celebration in the city. We had finally won. We'd chased those old stick-in-the-muds right off the planet. Finally, we had the world to ourselves to experiment with as we saw fit. We were going to make good use of this opportunity to be out from under the stifling constraints of MA's bureaucracy and the tired old rules of planetary governance. We were going to show them!

Then came the more puzzling news that Vanu and his right-hand advisor, one of the modified mortals named Amadon, had remained on-planet, together with as many as two hundred of their followers. They had apparently declared their determination to keep MA's light alive in the world in spite of the disruption of the rebellion.

So it wasn't going to be entirely our planet alone, after all!

* * *

To her credit, Mary Ann proved to be a model client for an architect. She knew what she wanted and appreciated Mein Host's interpretation of her wishes. She paid generously and on time and didn't quibble about the inevitable cost overruns. The work went well and was completed on time to

everyone’s acclaim.

If anyone in the growing community, now numbering about forty young men and women, raised the question as to why a minor psychotherapy group should spend so much money on its headquarters, I did not overhear it. Quite the contrary. Within a few weeks of completion, it appeared to make more sense for at least thirty-five of the most dedicated members to give up their own apartments and move into the mansion.

Mein Host now occupied an odd position in the circle of people surrounding Mary Ann and Robert. Having spent so much time overseeing the construction and still living somewhat uneasily with Jean, the idea of what he thought of as “squatting in the mansion” was not immediately appealing. Jean still had not told Mein Host about her American lover and her intentions to marry him. My ward’s continued conscious unawareness of this fundamental shift of energy in his relationship with Jean became an obvious sign to me that his own interests were also turning elsewhere.

However, as far as he knew himself, he sincerely believed that he was still devoted to Jean and hoped she would join him in attending the Communication Course and perhaps even join the group. Having no notion of what lay in the future for the community, he firmly believed that he could maintain a foot in both camps. As Mein Host became progressively more involved with the group, and during the long and often painful conversations with Jean, it became more evident to me, as it must have to her too, that staying on the fence wasn’t going to be possible.

Jean had never liked Mary Ann, speaking of the woman’s dominating personality and her unusual ideas as having all the makings of a clever confidence game. Mein Host, in spite of being emotionally drawn to Mary Ann, didn’t actually like her any more than he ever had and agreed with many of Jean’s criticisms. Yet, working as closely as he had with Mary Ann over the months it took to finish the mansion, he was able to see a side of her he could trust and respect.

Although by this time Jean had other plans for her life, she evidently still cared enough for Mein Host to do her best to dissuade him from becoming involved again—not to make the same mistake twice, as did a number of his friends. These rational arguments merely engaged his conscious mind while his compulsively rebellious nature, and his determination to follow his own

intuition, carried the day.

Having more access to his emotional body than his conscious mind, I was able to see how much emotional investment Mein Host was starting to place in Mary Ann. This was partially due to a subconscious awareness of Jean's infidelity and his need to replace her with another woman as the focus of his emotional life as much as his deepening interest in the work Mary Ann and he were doing together and the psychic and spiritual possibilities it was presenting.

One of the incidents that confirmed his interest in what was happening with the group occurred during an evening a few weeks before the mansion's completion, in the small house in Knightsbridge he'd been sharing with Jean these past two years. Neither Mary Ann nor Robert were there: only half a dozen members of the inner circle, who'd also been old friends of my ward, were there that evening. Jean knew them and liked them and was happy to have them in her house. It was a small space and everyone sat on comfortable cushions on the floor as a pipe of fine Turkish hashish was passed around. Roland Kirk was playing "My Free Kings" quietly and ecstatically in the background, setting a scene of gentle beauty, matched by shafts of late-summer sunlight filtering through the ivy, half-covering a window set high in the wall.

As the benefits of the smoke lofted the little gathering into a coherent group mind, I watched as they entered this heightened state of group consciousness together. I've heard other angels refer to this specific shift of consciousness as the creation of a "Merkaba vehicle," but in this case the frequency domain opened up spontaneously. I say this because that is how it appeared to me. What I wasn't aware of at the time was the involvement of the companion angels of all the individuals in the room, who had been conspiring together to facilitate this experience.

And the experience itself?

Each of the people in the room recognized one another from a previous Atlantean incarnation—that was quite clear to each of them in those moments. I could feel the truth of it in my heart, which was also the heart of the little group beating in harmony.

Although I try in all cases to reveal the truth of my observations, in this instance I'm respecting the privacy of all participants. Because reincarnation

and the claims made by many mortals are so often couched in self-aggrandizement and delusion, revealing this perfectly authentic, reincarnational, mutual revelation risks casual dismissal. Yet for those in that little room, it was no delusion. Truth carries its own resonant frequency. Nor was it something I was expecting, as it also surprised Mein Host.

Because the incident was facilitated by their companion angels, I'm inclined to believe that there was a primacy of purpose behind it. My supposition at the time was that it was intended to gently introduce the reality of a group incarnation, an idea that was to emerge frequently as the community coalesced.

Despite his doubts, Mein Host remained close to Mary Ann and was included as part of her inner circle, somewhat to the (unexpressed) resentment of a few others in the circle who'd become so closely enmeshed in Mary Ann's web.

Attending the Communication Course regularly, back with his old and dear friends, starting to do E-meter sessions again, and being affirmed by the woman who seemed to know his hidden side, all converged with his persistent intuition that the group—now calling itself the Process—had drawn him back to London "to find what he was looking for back in England."

This was the period described earlier during which the stress of this ambivalence, the pull of his life with Jean on the one hand, was vying with what was starting to become a deepening involvement with metaphysical questions on the other hand, created a profound psychic opening in the boy's mind. Significantly, the incidents described—the wrenching out-of-body trips, the incidents of telepathy, and the various synchronous events—all seemed to be propelling him further toward the community.

This ambivalence was settled one afternoon when Paul, evidently under Mary Ann's instructions, arrived at Mein Host's apartment to give him his "last chance." Although this somewhat aggressive approach will be known to most evangelical reformers and is reflected in the uncompromising cliché "You're either with us or against us!" it was what Mein Host must have needed to make his commitment to the Process, and to Mary Ann.

If the Mystery School had manifested around him and had reached out to him through a series of synchronicities, successfully trumping all his other interests and drawing him back into their welcoming fold, then he was going

to throw himself into the Mystery School. I could tell the depth of his intention from the changed and more relaxed state of his emotional body, blended with his new feeling of quiet determination. His heart was urging him to accept the challenge; yet, in his mind, he knew a life commitment of this sort (for that is how he thought of it) shouldn't be made so cavalierly.

I believe, even then, he knew his life in the Process was not going to be a straightforward affair.

* * *

How easy, how tempting it is to be wise after the event. Yet if I'm to truly understand how our idealistic dreams of an advanced planetary population of courageous, independent freethinkers went so badly wrong, I need to delve into what has *not been revealed* in available Multiverse records, as well as perhaps casting some light on what seems to have become accepted wisdom in some quarters.

First, let me make it clear: we whom they called the rebels, we sincerely believed we were serving a higher purpose, even as we were reviled by MA's puppets, accused of the one inexcusable sin of rejecting their authority. I can't speak directly to what was going on in the minds of Caligastia or Daligastia, but I certainly believed they were initially sincere in their belief in their plans for accelerated evolution. We had limped along for the past three thousand centuries, and we hadn't much to show for it. We were still stuck in the city, and the difficulties of the missionary work never seemed to ease up. There was something about this hominoid—a mix of cunning, timidity, aggression, and intelligence—that made them almost impossible to control.

Our training had emphasized the challenges facing any mortals in worlds where they had evolved as a result of the planet's normal evolutionary biological processes. They warned us that this was made even more difficult when the level of predation from wild animals was as extreme as it was in this dog-eat-dog world. The constant state of wariness, punctuated by moments of extreme stress and violence; the fear of darkness and of a sudden death lurking in the shadows; the perpetual clan and intertribal warfare and the many terrors of an uncertain life—all this and more, we were told, was designed to produce ultimately a race of mortals who would be courageous, resourceful, and loyal. But in those early days, most of what we had to deal

with was their fear and violence.

I have heard MA's official propaganda claims that ". . . you can have little or no concept of the marvelous progress of those faraway times . . ." But it was an exaggeration. There was some progress, of course, but it was painfully slow. Family life certainly improved among the tribes, especially when we were able to show the natives the benefits of planning for the future, of grandparents learning to love their grandchildren. The average life span had increased, due to some better childbearing techniques and the few health benefits, like clean water, that we were able to introduce. But even those simple improvements needed to be reinforced time and time again.

It was not as if the natives were naturally unintelligent—they weren't. In general, they were a remarkably bright lot. However, as we've previously seen, they tended to be crippled by their fears. While they might have made delightful companions as individuals, as Amadon demonstrated in his devotion to Vanu, collectively they reverted all too quickly to their animalistic emotions. Even though we might return one of our trainees to his or her tribal family fully equipped with the latest information, if that tribe becomes threatened, then everything the trainee learned in the city will be immediately forgotten in the emotional intensity of fright and flight. Years of work would be thrown away in one superstitious moment.

The improvements we'd been able to implement over those laborious 300,000 years all melted away within 100 years of Caligastia's taking control, demonstrating how superficial and evanescent those improvements actually were. The staff had constantly felt restricted by MA's regulations, like the prohibition on introducing any development that wasn't entirely natural to that time and place. But, what was "entirely natural" on a world such as this? Many times over the millennia I'd overheard different members of the staff complaining that if they followed that instruction, they would never be introducing any developments at all. They said how much they resented being constantly alerted to the ever-present danger of robbing the natives of their hard-won heritage by introducing ideas ahead of their time. This, too, had contributed to slowing progress to a crawl.

Thus, when the rebellion broke out, many supported Caligastia's argument that the planetside situation directly reflected the stultifying atmosphere MA imposed on the Local Universe administrators. The Prince, and he would

have known, spoke of some terrible errors. In one case he quoted, the information that a planet was ripe for life implantation was delayed for a million and a half years—because the file got lost in a bureaucratic mixup! And that wasn't an exception, according to the Prince.

In fact, on another occasion I recall Daligastia channeling through Tuta, making a joke about the official mismanagement during a brief pause in one of his tirades, when he said with a smirk, "As below, so above!" That got a few wry laughs from his audience.

Those of us with a wider experience of MA's oppressive and increasingly unreliable bureaucracy knew perfectly well what he was implying, and we agreed between us that something drastic needed to be done. If it wasn't Lucifer who opposed the hierarchy when he did, we all reckoned it would have had to be something else to blow away the cosmic cobwebs.

Even Vanu, as we discovered much later, had failed to receive a vital missive from MA's high representatives supporting his opposition to Caligastia and the rebellion, and at a time when he would have been most grateful to have received it.

Apparently the message got lost in galactic cyberspace.

The fact that Vanu continued with his mission on the planet (remember, he was the one loyalist staff member who chose to remain here) for the next 165,000 years, before being pulled back to Jerusem some 35,000 years ago and reunited with his Atman, speaks very impressively of his determined and loyal service. In retrospect I have come to admire his tenacity and the way he was able to resist Caligastia's hostile opposition for so long.

However, at the time we thought Vanu and his little pack of followers were a mere nuisance—and fools at that. Why couldn't they understand that we were going to open the eyes and enlighten this recalcitrant populace with our revolutionary ideas and our gift of personal freedom and independence? We were going to turn it all around. Vanu could shuffle along for all he was worth, but sooner or later we were sure he was going to have to come around to our way of thinking. We had confidence. Oh, yes, we did—foolish as it now sounds.

For the first half-century we boldly pushed ahead. No longer did the staff who remained in the city telepathically invite the appropriate natives to come

to the city for training before returning them to their tribes. That was deemed far too slow—too selective and measured. “Too elitist” was the gossip I heard. And considering that there were only 4,300 natives living with us at the time of the rebellion, and that was after 300,000 years of hard work, you can understand why Caligastia might have felt justified in taking more direct action.

Now the staff was being ordered to go out into the local tribal areas in person and use their impressive presence to shock the natives into more rational behavior. Just as a village in Ohio or Kent or Provence might react today to a couple of seven-foot-tall, supremely confident intraterrestrials appearing on their streets, so did we hope these direct interventions would have a salutary effect on the natives.

Sometimes it worked. We did have a few initial successes using this radical form of behavior modification, but even these started to fade whenever the staff withdrew their presence. Mostly, it was an appalling failure. In certain cases the tribespeople were terrified by the appearance of these magnificent superhumans, whom they had likely only heard about in the legends they told each other around the fires and whom they believed would melt back into the surrounding forest. In other worse cases, the staff ’s dominating appearance frequently produced a form of cognitive dissonance or a fugue state of mind among the native tribes they visited, which rendered them quite useless for any training at all.

Also, because the only tribespeople we ever encountered in the city were of the most superior type—which is why they’d been invited in the first place—we had little experience with those natives who hadn’t met our strict criteria for induction. We invariably underestimated the depth of their native cunning. Sometimes an entire tribe would pretend to be compliant and respectful to a particularly ambitious staff member (Böni fell into this trap more often than most), while reverting to their old, primitive, tribal ways the moment they were on their own again.

Another factor we didn’t take into account until far too late ended up creating even more tribal imbalances. Some tribes were starting to gain an edge over the others if they were more open to the technological advances we were proposing. They would then use these advantages to dominate and enslave the neighboring tribes.

When we realized that there was nothing much we could do to mitigate this development once the natives' bloodlust took control, an unfortunate change began occurring in the staff, especially among those mainly concerned with the most belligerent tribes.

I believe it started innocently enough when two of these technologically advanced tribes collided with each other and fought viciously, almost to the last man. I happened to overhear the two staff members, each responsible for the development of one of the two warring tribes, placing bets on the outcome. Even with the more relaxed standards of the new regime, I was certain that this wasn't a good sign.

Because I merely chanced to overhear the staff members, it wasn't in my nature to report it to Daligastia—not that it would have made any difference. The staff 's detached indifference to the plight of their human charges had been starting to turn more callous for some time.

For the record, however, I will say that I believe the source of much of the midwayers' later bad behavior lay in the example of the arrogant carelessness of the staff present, as betrayed by this seemingly insignificant wager.

Soon this sort of casual irresponsibility spread to others of the staff, and it didn't stop there. They made it something of a game to rig the odds by surreptitiously giving the edge to one group over another with superior strategies and weaponry. As you might imagine, this led to more conniving and even more violence, as the staff broke into factions, progressively alienated from one another.

One of the few gratifying results of this new competitive atmosphere, as well as the new freedoms being preached, was that the tribes closest to the city experienced an immediate spurt in cultural and technological advancement. We took this as an excellent sign that Caligastia's brilliance had solved the problem that had bedeviled our work for so long. "Add some competition," he used to preach, "and see what we've been missing all these years!" And, if the results were as promising as they appeared, perhaps it was this short-lived success that made the staff feel that they could get away with a little friendly wager on the side.

While this rapid development briefly held true for those in close proximity to the city, when we attempted to introduce the same freedoms to the outlying tribes, the result was terrible confusion as the old ways, which had served

them well for so long, disintegrated around them. This weakened state led to the inevitable invasions and massacres that followed as the more advanced tribes expanded into their territories.

Once again, this produced a consequence that none of us intended. Because of our interference, a growing distrust of the staff and the other city dwellers was starting to gain some traction among many of the tribes-people. The goodwill we'd originally established, which was hard won and vital to our mission and which we'd striven to maintain over the millennia, was starting to crumble away.

Bit by bit, it seemed to those of us who were observing, the corruption was setting in. Soon the staff was infiltrating the tribes with midwayers ordered to sow trouble wherever they could. They manipulated people's fear of tribal and racial differences; they reinforced their superstitions by working invisible sleights of hand; midwayers would appear and disappear at will, thus fortifying the homegrown impulse toward ghost worship; they deliberately set tribe against tribe and individual against individual. No longer was our mission about cultural upliftment; it became purely about spreading rebellion.

Attempts to accelerate cultural advancements were quickly forgotten as the staff reveled in all that had been previously forbidden. The gambling with human lives hardened their hearts. Their power to foment violence and mayhem whenever they desired became an addiction. The technology of fermentation, previously forbidden, led to stills being set up in the city and the blight of public drunkenness.

The fandors disappeared from the city. We heard that they were working with Vanu's group. Work with the pigeons ground to a halt as the birds were stolen for food.

Competition between different members of the staff, which started as games, soon became divisive. Colleagues who were previously close split into cliques and subgroups, and then into individuals, each insisting on the righteousness of their causes. They fought duels, but their very immortality prevented any definitive result. They set their all-too-mortal followers against one another and wallowed in the bloodshed.

The staff indulged in all their forbidden desires. The basic prohibition against having sex with humans, which had been rigidly enforced since the staff 's arrival, began to be ignored as a series of rapes further terrified the

mortal inhabitants of the city.

This, no one had predicted.

Yet thinking about it later, perhaps it was always a lot to expect exemplary behavior from a group of relatively unsophisticated (in Multiverse terms) beings after 300,000 years of being good and toeing the line. I would hear them talking to one another about all the delectable experiences in which they hadn't had a chance to indulge during their lifetimes in the worlds of their mortal birth. If the more tentative members of the staff raised any objections to this growing corruption (and few did), they were firmly reminded that by following Lucifer and Caligastia, all sixty of them had already made the most perilous decision of their eternal lives. A little innocent fun wasn't going make it any worse. As I write this story, I find myself asking, at what point did I start to realize not simply that our rebellious dreams had all but evaporated, but that the very beings in whom we'd put our faith and confidence were becoming irrevocably corrupted in front of our eyes?

And there wasn't much we Watchers could do about it.

We'd made that perilous choice, too. We'd supported the brilliance of Lucifer, Satan, and Caligastia, because, like us, they were part of the celestial hierarchy. High beings, they were. We simply couldn't believe they would lead us astray. Like them, many of us had heard the whispers of the Holy Mother's voice and had taken courage from this Divine whisper that we were choosing the right course of action. We'd agreed to get on the boat: now there was nothing we could do but sail in it wherever it took us.

Please understand that I'm not justifying my decision here. I made my choice, and I have to live with it. Whether the Mother's voice ultimately turns out to be an authentic manifestation of Her mysterious influence or a deliberate bit of contrived telepathic misinformation from Lucifer's counterespionage unit has yet to be revealed. Suffice it to say that at the time I fully believed the Mother had reached down and touched those She had selected for this delicate "mission within a mission."

So, right or wrong, we had to live by our decisions.

If, in the choices I make when I tell my story, I appear to focus more on the negative, on what went wrong, it's because that is what I have witnessed. The available Multiverse records, for example, in describing the Lucifer Rebellion

and the effects it had on this planet include several passages applauding the loyalty and courage of various personalities, among them Vanu and his right-hand man, Amadon. And, of course, there were some glorious feats of bravery and self-sacrifice.

Good for them, I say. But was that what the rebellion was really about—a crude test of loyalty? If that is how you read the situation, fair enough. I hold no grudges. We all—Watchers and staff alike—did our best to discern the truth of this almost-inconceivable event, an angelic uprising. We had no precedent to guide us: the reports of the two rebellions were so heavily redacted as to be no use to us when we sought counsel. We were all flying by the seat of our pants, if we had pants. No one could have known in those heady early days how such an unprecedented situation was going to turn out.

Those of us who believed we were following the path of truth, at least as we understood it, have been portrayed subsequently by agents loyal to MA as arrogant, vain, depraved, and downright criminal in our intentions. Even if the later deterioration of the planetary situation over the millennia has justified these accusations, I feel it's important to assert that our revolution did not start out that way. We were filled with hope and good intentions. We'd faced off against the boundless power of MA, and we believed we'd won the day. The truth had finally triumphed, as Lucifer had always assured us it would.

Perhaps I'm paraphrasing one of your savants when I say that if truth and loyalty were to part ways, I will always pledge to follow the truth and let loyalty be damned.

❖ ❖ ❖

The Communication Course took place on Wednesday and Friday evenings and clearly had a powerful effect on all those attending. Using various psychosocial exercises, it quickly became obvious to anyone paying attention—and Mein Host was certainly paying attention—that most people had no idea how to communicate with one another. The details of this are not relevant here, except for one thing—listening. They were learning to listen. Not simply to hear what someone is saying, all the while thinking about what to say next, but to actually listen and understand.

Now this made my ears perk up. Listening, we Watchers like to say, is the

first stage of hearing. And by this I mean hearing the quiet inner voice of an angel or your intuition. Although this was never the conscious aim of the Communication Course, which was always focused on the meat and potatoes of human interaction, it became an unintended, and for the group a somewhat startling, consequence of all the work they'd done on listening to one another.

During this time I first became aware of how Mein Host's two companion angels, more aware than I am of the lad's chosen destiny, were starting to gently influence his emotional and spiritual intelligence. Doubtless, the angels had intervened in their subtle way before in the boy's life, but because we operate on slightly different frequencies, it didn't come into my awareness until this point.

Personally I was against his growing enthusiasm for the Process. I saw no good coming from it. At some point he was going to have to buck the system, and I know what can happen from rebelling against the system. Yet, I had to surrender all these feelings when I became aware that his companion angel Joy maintained that she had her reasons for smoothing Mein Host's way into the community. I knew then that there was nothing I could do but sit back and observe.

After all, that's what we transitional angels do—observe and record. That's why, after the rebellion, those of us who followed Lucifer and Caligastia have been called Watchers. We watch and learn. Yes, learn. Imagine that, dear reader: we learn from your lives, from your triumphs and challenges, but most of all from your mistakes.

Companion angels are different. They also learn, of course, but that isn't their primary function. Companion angels, thought of as guardian angels in most Christian denominations, are specifically matched to their human wards. Before incarnation they are privy to the spiritual needs of an individual's soul and its life path, and they work behind the scenes to facilitate this. When human beings die, they will find their companion angels present at their life review, as well as playing an important part in reconstituting the spiritual elements that continue onward.

There is something of a mystery to this, which I don't claim to understand, but I believe that at some point ascendent humans fuse with their companion angels so as to become single composite beings. On the other hand, if a mortal dies and, after his or her life review, chooses not to continue to

ascend, the companion angels assigned to that person can then be reassigned to other mortals, sometimes in other worlds, but most frequently in the same one as their previous ward.

I was curious about this. Why would an angel want to return again and again to a world like this? Surely, once would be enough! But, no, Joy tells me, because they are so closely bonded with their wards, companion angels come to have a deep affection for the ways of a particular world.

“We care very deeply for our wards,” Joy tells me. “We get so emotionally invested in the spiritual growth of the individuals in our care that it can easily carry over into a continuing concern and love for the world of their mortal life. We want to be around to watch and help in that world’s mental and spiritual development.”

Because it’s rare for me to communicate with a companion angel, and I can only do it here because of Mein Host’s close relationship with Joy, I asked her to tell us a little about herself.

“I have accompanied many in their mortal incarnations, both in this world and in others.” She speaks with no hint of pride. “I have been well tested, and I am regarded as among the most experienced of the seraphic guardians currently on this planet.

“It is true—I have come to love this world. It is the birth-world of my last three mortal assignments, and I trust I will be accompanying my ward for the rest of his mortal life. Companion angels have been made aware recently that this world is preparing for a massive transformation soon to occur, and this urgency allows us to work even more closely with our wards.”

And that was all she was prepared to tell me right now.

So, let me take this opportunity to explain how companion angels are awarded to their mortal wards. While some people have two companion angels exclusively devoted to them, this is by no means true for everybody. It depends where each person is on his or her own spiritual path.

Young souls—beginners in groups of one thousand—become the wards of a pair of companion angels with a company of assisting cherubim. As these people grow in spirit and experience over the course of their lives, they are assembled on merit into groups of progressively smaller size—five hundred, one hundred, ten, and, finally, one. This happens as the human “breaks

through the inertia of the animal legacy.” That is how the chief of seraphim has described this moment, but it’s essentially when the individual has acquired the sufficient mental clarity and spiritual depth to deserve the constant attention of two seraphic guardians.

Hold it. I’m hearing from Joy again, who wants to add something.

“As you know, we serve in pairs, so I also speak for my colleague in all that I say. To clear up some of the confusion as to how we function with our wards, I should emphasize the limits of our intervention. We seek more to augment the positive choices they make in their lives rather than acting to prevent the poor ones. In this way they can learn from the consequences of their actions.

“There are rare situations in which, with the help of midwayers, we are permitted to actively intervene in material reality. For example, I alerted the two midwayers responsible for pulling my ward and his young lady out from the car before it crashed. I took the action because it was a freak ‘accident,’ not of his doing, and because cutting his mortal life short would have served no purpose. He had not completed what he came here to do.

“The important matter is the simplicity of our approach. By working to amplify our wards’ choices, which further their emotional, mental, and spiritual growth, we send clear messages, which are interpreted as synchronicities, as to the most valuable direction for them to take. If they are listening and observing themselves with sufficient self-awareness, they will follow this line of subtle guidance to their benefit.

“That is all I have to say right now.”

“Thank you, Joy,” I replied. “And if I may consult you from time to time . . .”

With that the channel closed.

11

A Community in Exile

Ribald Rejection, Reincarnational Insights, Fall of the City, the Serpent People, and a First Visit to Zandana

Mein Host took the sensible precaution of keeping his room in the apartment he shared with his five friends in Lexham Gardens for a couple of months after moving in with the community in the mansion.

Although this was considered his “escape route” by one or two of the more dedicated members and prompted some sly remarks behind his back, I knew that such an immediate escape was never his intention. His reason was more mundane: there was no place for his library in the Balfour Place mansion. This had now swelled to more than a thousand substantial volumes on philosophy, psychology, and the sciences, as well as books on metaphysics and religion, and most of the classic French, Russian, and English novels. He was going to have to keep those books somewhere.

However skeptical his Processean friends might have been about his holding on to his room, it proved to be a fortuitous decision when the next unexpected challenge arose. But, before we get to that, let’s watch him as he goes about his new life in the community.

In spite of the size and general opulence of the mansion on Balfour Place, the conditions for the thirty-five young men and women were Spartan. This didn’t hold true for Mary Ann and Robert, who had settled happily into their elegant penthouse apartment with built-in furniture and cupboards designed by Mein Host. A few of their inner circle had rooms to themselves, but everybody else simply had to bunk down where they found a place on the floor. There were no beds, and they considered themselves fortunate that the floors were richly carpeted. They slept five or six to a room, and perhaps because most of them had boarding schools in their background, they divided naturally into men’s and women’s dormitories.

Considering that they were all healthy young men and women, some of whom had already established sexual relationships with one another, it was surprising to those observing that there was so little sexual tension in the house. In fact, this lack of any kind of active sexuality would continue for the next year throughout their travels. Only when they returned to London in late 1966 did sex emerge as an issue that needed to be explored.

Mein Host kept his job at the architectural office and, like the others who had jobs, turned over his salary to the community. Like everyone else, he had already given the little money he had to the group (including what remained from his fees for the building design) when he had formally joined the community and moved into Balfour Place. The evenings were filled with intense encounters and group meetings, everybody obviously realizing what an important step they'd taken. Over the weekends, they split into small groups, and, full of zealous enthusiasm, they went out into the streets and parks of London to talk about the Process. But mostly they did this for the evangelical enjoyment of berating a sleepy public with their newfound truths.

Robert had been spending much of his time throughout this period pulling together material gathered from the Communication Courses and the long analytical meetings Mary Ann and Robert were conducting with their inner circle. Although the psychological system proposed in Robert's early books has been viewed by some critics as derivative of the Austrian psychoanalyst Alfred Adler, it was, in fact, an original production of Robert's mind and Mary Ann's creative imagination.

So highly did the pair think of their formulation of all that was wrong with the world—about which they were largely correct—and how the Process had the answers to all these problems that Robert was prompted to give public lectures at Oxford University and the London School of Economics. Both places were considered bastions of the British academic intelligentsia and they had high hopes of making a breakthrough among the students who recognized the value of Robert's analysis.

That was not to happen. In both cases, Robert's words were met with resounding jeers and boos, as were almost all the community's attempts to expand their influence. I was more than once to hear the phrase about prophets being unwelcome in their own land.

Mein Host experienced a taste of this rude rejection at Hyde Park's

Speakers' Corner one Sunday afternoon. As one of a score of men standing on soapboxes or milk crates, each one expounding on their particular hobbyhorses and surrounded by groups of heckling men and women, Mein Host was vigorously taking his audience to task for all the wrongs of the world. Like many evangelists before him, he was finding the rising passion of his rhetoric viscerally satisfying and was unaware of what was happening in the crowd beneath him. A young joker had bundled up some newspapers and packed them into the milk crate on which Mein Host was standing. It was only when he finally smelled the smoke from the burning rubber on his shoes that he realized, to hoots of derision, that they were trying to set him on fire!

It made a great story when he returned to the community in the evening and that, along with Robert's failures and the rejection the others were experiencing, bonded them even more closely as a community. Any pain or resentment from the rejection would be quickly dissolved in laughter and ebullient self-confidence. Public repudiation merely reinforced their belief in the righteousness of their cause. It was not an unfamiliar feeling to me and I have to admit a certain sense of déjà-vu dread.

The English establishment has a long history of dealing with iconoclasts and rebels, allowing them to spout off at Speakers' Corner being one of the more obvious. In situations more threatening to the status quo, vilification by the popular press was generally regarded as being the most effective way of dealing with dissidents.

So it was with the Process, now starting to be labeled a "cult," a term that, even then—well before the tragedies of Jonestown and Heaven's Gate—was already freighted with a slightly menacing connotation. I found this derogatory term somewhat irrational as all religions must start as cults.

Possibly it was due to Mary Ann's remarkably intuitive grasp of the world, or more likely she'd heard through one of her contacts that trouble was brewing, but one evening after they'd only been in the mansion for less than five months, Mary Ann and Robert called the whole community together to discuss the future.

Mein Host had been feeling hints of change in the air but wasn't present at any of the discussions the small group surrounding Mary Ann and Robert had been having. So he was less surprised than most of the others to hear Mary Ann raising the issue of the community leaving England.

Reporting it from my point of view, I had to admire the way in which Mary Ann manipulated the group. I'd seen something of this in the way she was able to handle herself when she and Robert were conducting the Communication Course, but this meeting was something altogether different. During the Communication Course, I could see how she made sure not to outshine Robert so as to give the impression of a well-balanced relationship. And, indeed, it was a very convincing performance. They worked brilliantly together as a couple.

Yet, something was changing. It wasn't as if Robert spoke any less, but what he said became of less importance in light of Mary Ann's machinations. I could see from her energy body that she was quite determined to get out of England, yet she wanted it to appear as a group decision. Now this was intriguing, I thought!

Neither I, nor Mein Host, knew it at the time, but those meetings up in the top apartment at which he wasn't present were being used by Mary Ann to convince her true believers of the wisdom of the move. It was therefore like watching dominos falling, as one after another of her primed inner circle spoke their peace, building up a wave of agreement that England was not ready for what they had to say; England didn't deserve them; that England's was a cynical and materialistic culture that wouldn't listen while it brought disaster down on itself.

So cleverly was this managed that by the end of the meeting everybody there was thoroughly convinced that they wanted to leave London, some believing it might even have been their idea. Trying to decide where to go raised the same question and got resolved just as easily. It had to be the Bahamas. They were still in British hands, and there were islands in the Caribbean available for purcahse, weren't there?

"We'll be free then," Mary Ann said enthusiastically. "Absolutely free to proceed with what we're here to do," she added to cheers all around. "And no more having to deal with the Gray Forces. Even louder cheers. The Gray Forces represented the forces of mediocrity and repression, all that was wrong with England and everything the community hated.

The shift was subtle. It happened almost without the conscious awareness of the individuals in the group. The mild dislike many of them felt for "stodgy old England" had gradually metastasized into a full-blown

disillusionment with Western civilization over the course of their failed attempts to let the British public know what a terrible fate awaited them if they ignored the teachings of the Process. It was difficult to tell exactly when during the course of the meeting that the mood switched from merely leaving England to finding an island and starting over, but by the end of the meeting there were few in the group who had any doubt that they were about to leave the country forever.

The next week was chaotic. After the enthusiasm of the meeting wore off, each of them found themselves dealing with the reality of their decision. Leaving England, however much they might have disliked the place, had clearly not been in their minds before the meeting. Yet the very next day they were calling parents and friends to inform them they'd be leaving the country and would never be seeing them. There was a perverse justice in this. Didn't it just prove to everybody how dedicated they all were? How they always meant what they said? And now they were turning their backs on their skeptical friends and relations, never to see them again.

This was not an easy period for Diana, Mein Host's mother. The two had become a little closer emotionally in the years since he'd left home, and in spite of their both living in London, they saw each other relatively infrequently. This suited them both. Diana's independence of spirit, foisted on her as a child and possibly reinforced by an unconscious identification with her namesake's archetype, the Goddess Diana, to whom she sometimes raised a toast, matched Mein Host's impulse to separate himself from his mother and live his own life. Besides, there was so much unexpressed between them that wouldn't emerge for many years, that neither felt comfortable in each other's presence for very long.

Diana had always been a reader, and that gave mother and son throughout her long life a durable, if somewhat abstract, common interest. Both invariably enjoyed and appreciated book recommendations from the other.

As already mentioned, Diana chose to include the boy in her business decisions from a very early age. Much to her advantage, too. In his sixteenth year he devised an ingeniously simple, yet extremely effective, storage system for her company for keeping her filmstrips, slides, negatives, and photographs in good condition.

DW Viewpacks, as the system came to be called, were clear, plastic

pockets that could hold a number of different-size transparencies and hang from the bars in standard filing cabinets. Prior to computers, filing cabinets were ubiquitous. Like many simple inventions, it was so obvious that it was hard to believe that no one had come up with it before. Diana's already successful educational filmstrip production company, soon to be renamed DW Viewpacks, researched the correct archival plastic and then started manufacturing and marketing Viewpacks.

In the late 1950s, with cameras becoming increasingly accessible and photography growing into a pervasively popular medium of expression, nothing like Viewpacks existed. Littering the desks and floors of many studios and homes were 35 mm slides, 4 x 5 transparencies, strips of negatives, and big 8 x 10 transparencies; either that or the slides remained in boxes unseen and unremembered. So for many buyers it was a Eureka moment when they first saw the system. Most people already had filing cabinets. Viewpacks rapidly became the gold standard for the growing audiovisual industry, as well as most museums, libraries, corporations, and serious photographers all over the world until computer-image storage replaced the system in the 1990s.

Becoming a single working mother at a most difficult time in English history, starting a small business and making a success of it, and moving easily in London's artistic and theatrical circles—all this and being a naturally attractive woman had rapidly matured this insecure, convent-educated girl into a sophisticated London businesswoman, widely recognized as being at the top of her field.

Diana's emotional detachment and the totality of her involvement with her business had served the boy well in the area of his relationships with girls. I could tell from the tone of her voice after hearing about his relationship with Vicky—his first girlfriend—that without ever mentioning it, she was relieved that her son had none of the homosexual tendencies that she believed troubled her ex-husband, George. It gave her much pleasure, for example, to bring Vicky and her son breakfast in bed when Vicky would stay over in the year before Mein Host moved out to live with her. She also became great friends with Jean in the two years before her son rejoined the Process.

However, when Mein Host announced that he was leaving England to start a new life with the community on an island somewhere—he didn't know

where—and would never be returning to the country, she faced her greatest test. Although she was a worrier by nature, she'd always trusted her son, laughingly acknowledging that "he always seems to land on his feet." She'd met Mary Ann and did not like her. Now she was watching her son, after a long training and an apprenticeship, turn his back on architecture in favor of a move that seemed senseless to her and for which, when telling her friends about it, she blamed Mary Ann.

In spite of all this, she behaved admirably around my ward and accepted his decision with a minimum of obvious concern. I was proud of her as I watched them saying good-bye for the last time. Her emotional body was in turmoil, yet after a life of repressing her pain, she showed nothing of it. So much so that Mein Host was quite unaware of how fearful she really was. Perhaps knowing more about the ways of the world than her twenty-four-year-old son, she also realized, as she told her friend Gerdy after he'd left, that "Nothing lasts forever. He'll be back."

And, of course, she was right.

He did come back.

A changed man.

Yet again.

❖ ❖ ❖

We all should have known better. I understand that now I'm looking at the rebellion through a clearer lens. And herein is one of the challenges I face in preparing this narrative: I look back as I write with such a profoundly changed state of mind that it's difficult to chart precisely when I first realized the folly of my decision to side with the rebels. So please be patient with me, kind reader, and remember that Watchers don't learn as fast as humans. And we're certainly not accustomed to making mistakes!

Within ninety years the tribes we had liberated—the very ones we had strategized for and whom we'd favored with advanced weaponry—all coalesced and attacked the city of Dalamatia, laying a siege that lasted a year before they finally overran the place.

Fortunately for the secession staff and their companions, this delay offered a chance for them to get out with their midwayer associates and camp

followers and head northward. The escape was well planned and was largely facilitated by their midwayers, who fomented mayhem in the camps of the tribes besieging the city. By setting fire to tents carefully chosen to suggest a deliberate provocation, they managed to turn tribe against tribe, distracting them sufficiently for the staff and their entourage to slip away on a moonless night while the fighting was at its height.

The staff had always maintained a presence on the coast, a few miles to the south of the city walls, and had built a small fleet of boats they kept in a sheltered harbor. This had provided the city with a steady supply of fresh fish for as long as the staff had been there. Knowing the value of polyunsaturated omega-3 fatty acids in brain development, they had made sure it was one of the first actions they undertook after they completed the city walls.

The boats, of course, were of an extremely simple design, as they weren't allowed to be too far in advance of contemporary boat-building standards. From the surprised comments I heard when the staff finally did set sail, it sounded to me as if the designers included a number of hidden improvements that served to make their trip up the Persian Gulf safer and more comfortable. The inclusion, for example, of a small retractable keel gave them access to the shallow waters of the many swamps they encountered, as well as enabling them to outrun the storms that could blow in when they were in the open Gulf.

A small village had grown up overlooking the harbor, housing those privileged humans who could be trusted to work on the boats. When it was clear the city was going to be overrun by the barbarian tribes, the staff made sure the boats were readied for their escape. In another unforeseen consequence, some of the native boat-builders who had worked with the staff on the secret improvements and who'd chosen to stay behind when the staff left, subsequently revolutionized boat design in that area of the coast.

The tribes went wild after taking over the city. The few human inhabitants who'd decided not to escape with the staff, believing they would be hailed as special by the tribes for the knowledge they'd gained while in the city, were horrified to find themselves being marched away to be sacrificed on a makeshift shrine set up in the central Temple.

Soon after entering the city, the hordes began tearing down the neat little houses. Finding the stills led to further violence as the unexpected effects of

alcohol took hold. Many died of alcohol poisoning and others in drunken brawls. In a futile effort to curb and control the bloodlust, a shrine was set up in the Temple, dedicated to Nog, a barbarian god of light and fire. The priests of Nog hoped to curb and redirect the violence in service of their god by hurling their prisoners into the fire pit that formed the central feature of the shrine, to be burned alive in a ceremony intended to ensure the sun's return.

This unpleasant and sanguinary attempt to control the hordes failed and the city fell further into dissolution as the tribes drifted away to battle once more among themselves. The few who remained in the ruined city scratched out a pathetically meager existence where once lived and worked the most sophisticated culture the world would see for another 200,000 years.

All this became irrelevant, however, some seventy-two years after the tribes originally broke through the walls when a massive tidal wave sweeping in from the gulf finally obliterated all evidence that such a beautiful city as Dalamatia had ever existed in that spot.

So ended this long era in the planet's turbulent history. For all the difficulties and challenges, compared to what was coming, it had been a golden age full of promise for a well-organized and devoted population governed by a wise and caring Planetary Prince and his brilliant staff.

* * *

The Process community reached its decision to leave England in a single evening. Within a couple of weeks, they were in Nassau, the capital city of the Bahamas.

They had made impulsive decisions before, but nothing quite as radical as this move, and it set a pattern that contributed to the sense of mystery that was to surround the group for as long as it flourished. They would appear unexpectedly in a city overnight, as they were about to do in Nassau, and disappear just as enigmatically when the decision was reached to move on.

In this case two scouts had been sent out to Nassau on the first available plane to find a house to rent that would accommodate thirty-five people, while everyone else scrambled to get their affairs in order, obtain the necessary papers, and buy their one-way tickets to the Bahamas. A few had some money they'd tucked away, but because everyone had been required to turn in their money to the central fund on joining, it demanded some

ingenuity to raise the cash. Although it would seem logical for the fares to be paid by the community's central fund, this wouldn't be true to their tenant of personal responsibility. Regardless of how much money had been donated to the Process, each person would have to find the fare for themselves. This proved too demanding for some of them and at least half a dozen members took it as their opportunity to leave.

It was a harsh and unremitting requirement, the first of many, which for my ward involved a considerable sacrifice.

A prewar Martin acoustic guitar, picked up for a song in a thrift shop unaware of its true value, went for a meager £20 ($33). The instrument was worth ten or twenty times as much. Desk, drawing board, bed, and chairs all fetched a few more pounds. But it was his beloved library that made it all possible. He sold it quietly for £300 ($525), not an inconsiderable sum in 1964, to a secondhand bookstore in South Kensington.

However attached he might have been to his books, I was surprised at how easy it was for him to get rid of them. Sad as it might have been, I could feel a new lightness of spirit in him.

"Like shedding a skin," I heard him say to a friend when he arrived back at the community. Three hundred pounds was enough for a single ticket with some left over to help out his friends. Mein Host was never driven by money, and never having had much, I could see how he welcomed letting go of the need for it, compared to some of the others, who found it agonizing to be without any personal cash.

In spite of his initial regret at having to sell his library, he appeared to have forgotten about his books when, some months later**,** he received a letter from Diana. He deliberately hadn't told her about the sale until the last moment, knowing she'd be horrified and would have insisted he buy them back—which is exactly what she tried to do, hurrying down to the bookshop the day after he left the country. When she tried to explain what her son had done, the owner cut her off midsentence and told her they were all gone. Every single one of Mein Host's books had been sold.

"In one week? Every single one? Not one left?" Diana couldn't believe what he was saying. Perhaps he'd misunderstood her. But it wasn't that. It was R. B. Kitaj.

Diana hadn’t heard of the artist, although Mein Host knew very well who he was. Together with David Hockney, Kitaj was one of the foremost artists working in England before the explosion of pop art. In his lifetime he was considered one of the world’s greatest draftsmen, often placed up there with the incomparable Edgar Degas.

Three days before Diana arrived at the bookstore, so the owner told her, Kitaj, a regular customer, had come in the store. As he was browsing through the shelves, pulling out a book here and there, he’d apparently noticed a similarity in the notations from book to book. Every volume he pulled out that interested him seemed to have notes and cross-references in the same hand. At the seventh book he’d queried the owner, to be told that all the books were part of a lot he’d recently acquired.

R. B. Kitaj bought the entire collection of more than a thousand books—mostly sight unseen.

Many years later, in the 1980s, Mein Host, when was back in London, phoned the artist, to discover his library was being treasured every bit as much as he’d cared for it. It had taken Kitaj many years to work his way through all the books, he’d explained, and he hadn’t finished every one of them yet. The two men talked for a long time, and although they never stayed in contact, they both recognized a kindred spirit in the other.

It’s only now I’m revealing (and Mein Host is learning) the reason for this. R. B. Kitaj and his wife, the American artist Sandra Fisher, were both self-aware incarnate angels. Not fully self-aware, I might add, but both artists had a highly developed sense of intuition and were courageous souls who had delved deeply into themselves to find out who they really were.

Yet any talk of angels—incarnate or otherwise—would have been quite foreign to the thirty young people of the community, now safely installed in a large, rather grand, colonial mansion in Nassau.

Princess House was set off on a palm-lined lane within walking distance of downtown Nassau. Built in the local style, an architecture derived from colonial memories of Victorian guesthouses in seaside towns like Brighton and Eastbourne, Princess House was clad in horizontal clapboard, painted a bright, cerulean blue, and had windows with a delicate, white trim. It gave the building a cheery, tropical appearance from the street.

The main three-story house overlooked an interior courtyard with a sizable swimming pool and a smaller, two-story cottage—once servants' quarters—on the opposite side of the pool. The trees and shrubs surrounding the courtyard were crowded together in a sultry opulence, while the large, kidney-shaped pool lay in the center of the yard, the water blindingly blue in the sun.

It was late spring when the community arrived, and already the oppressive heat was only broken by a sudden downpour arriving regularly every afternoon at the same time—so different from England's unpredictable weather. The unaccustomed scents; the tumultuous rain that started as abruptly as it stopped; pasty-white Caucasian bodies in heat shock; and, after the industrial hubbub of London, the sound of tropical birds and the constant whisper of palm fronds in the breeze—all these unfamiliar sensations conspired to create a languorous atmosphere unlike anything Mein Host, or any of the others, had previously experienced.

Because I want to use this narrative to explore the psychic and spiritual patterns of Mein Host's development, I will overlook much of what occurred on the mundane level in Nassau. Suffice it to say many of them got jobs in the local economy, they ate together, slept in their various dormitories, splashed in the pool, rode bicycles down to the nearby beach to swim in the deliciously warm waters of the Caribbean, and meditated together.

They meditated together? Where did that come from?

Meditation was something new—something that emerged quite naturally within the first couple of weeks after arriving in Nassau, perhaps brought on by the sense of growing relaxation, and possibly as a substitute for the E-meters, which they hadn't brought with them. I could see that it was also a way for Mary Ann to bind the group more closely together. And she did it very skillfully indeed.

The community meditated together in the courtyard every evening before they turned in for the night and, more and more frequently as the weeks passed, when they were all in the pool together. Having no formal training in meditation techniques, their approach was simply to sit quietly together and observe their thoughts dissolve in the silence.

At first there was no agreed-upon intention set beforehand. But what I was able to see was how each person's emotional body, however previously rigid

or unstable, began to unclench. Knots were unwinding, and the colors in their auras began flowing more easily. Later their meditations would come to be more directed, seeking answers to specific questions posed by the group, but at this stage they were open and held with no overt intention. During this early period, Mein Host had the meditation that completely changed everything in his life—once again.

Mein Host's dislike of Mary Ann by this time had ripened into a visceral distaste for the woman. He resented her sense of superiority, and he was still suspicious of her psychic powers (in which he didn't altogether believe). Yet she did seem to know what everyone was thinking. He despised the way she lazed around while almost everyone else held down a job, and he was repelled by her plump, white body, sheathed in a minimal, revealing green bikini from which bulged breasts and, more disturbing for the lad, sprigs of reddish brown pubic hair sprouting from the sides of her bikini bottom. As Mary Ann displayed those curly little coils blatantly, brazenly, with no apparent shame—so unlike any of the well-brought-up young women he'd known—he found himself paradoxically fixated on them whenever they were in evidence.

He thought many of her extreme views on some subjects were unpleasantly dictatorial, and he feared what was becoming of his friend Robert under his wife's autocratic influence.

However, for all that, Mary Ann had an undeniably brilliant, incisive, intuitive intelligence. She'd been the first person in Mein Host's short life to see beneath his masks, to understand his difference. She had once told him he was part of the Serpent People, and although he didn't know then what it meant, it had moved him deeply and bonded him even more closely to Mary Ann beneath his level of conscious awareness.

Yet here he was. Confused and ambivalent, but at least he hadn't walked away this time. He understood enough to know that the intensity of his reaction must have more to do with him than with Mary Ann. His intuition and his companion angels were working hard to keep him in the community, and he was sufficiently aware of himself and his needs to be determined to stay the course (whatever the course was) until he broke through to the other side—although breaking through to what, or where, he had no idea.

Perhaps the closest analogue of this seemingly idiosyncratic behavior was his early determination to continue to explore LSD, despite his agonizingly dark and horrific early trips. I was aware of his modus operandi by this time. Just as he had challenged his fear of heights by climbing up the crane, I knew that by staying in the community led by Mary Ann he was challenging the darker elements of his personality as well as his deep distrust of women in general.

This might be the place to introduce another aspect of Mein Host's previous incarnation in this world, which I touched on earlier in passing, because the torture this individual received was a trauma that carried over into Mein Host's current lifetime.

I've no wish to embarrass Mein Host by mentioning names in such a sensitive arena as reincarnation, because Western religious cultures on the whole don't support the notion of reincarnation, thoughtlessly dismissing it as self-delusionary or absurdly grandiose. So I will merely call this worthy individual the "soldier."

The soldier was the illegitimate son of an aristocrat who'd left his wife for a woman he didn't marry and with whom he subsequently had five children including the boy who becomes the soldier. In spite of inheriting his title, the couple lived under the name of the woman's father, of whom she was herself an illegitimate daughter. It is little wonder that our young soldier grew up sexually confused.

As the second oldest of the five children, he had a relatively normal and undistinguished childhood and education, but he always had an eye on the army. He had a taste of it when he ran away from home at seventeen. This, I might add for the record, was as much to get away from his mother and family as to seriously join up with the military.

It's not my intention to tell the soldier's history here but to focus on his relationship with his mother. She was an intensely ambitious and demanding woman who ruled her family with the twin whips of love and fear. As an illegitimate woman in Victorian England, working as a governess who'd snared her aristocratic employer, she was preoccupied with appearing respectable. When she wasn't smothering her son with love, and she wasn't whipping him with a cane, she was whispering her secret ambitions for him in his ear.

He flourished intellectually at Oxford and traveled widely before joining the British Army and serving throughout the First World War. He had a distinguished, but personally disappointing, career from which he never fully recovered, dying in his forties in a motorcycle accident. This accident itself was of interest, because it prompted precisely the same choice in the soldier that Mein Host faced in his Deux Chevaux crash. As the soldier, he'd swerved to avoid killing two boys on bicycles and ended up by killing himself; as Mein Host, he'd swerved to avoid killing the woman whose car he was about to broadside and a couple of midwayers pulled him out before he was killed.

In each case, the instinctual willingness to sacrifice his life to save others was lodged more in his tendency toward self-denial than a considered act of courage, verging, in the case of the soldier's later life, on the masochistic. In both incarnations Mein Host's background and education, each in different ways, instilled a profound devaluation of the self—a belief imprinted into his body by beatings, sexual guilt, and adult indifference. If I replay the images of the soldier's crash I see a slight smile of satisfaction on his face as he flies off his motorcycle and through the air on the way to his death.

My point in filling in some of Mein Host's previous incarnation is, as I previously suggested, to focus on the soldier's demanding and ambitious mother. I do this because the subject of mothers played a pivotal role in the discussion my ward had with his angels before this incarnation.

For reincarnates, these prelife deliberations are conducted to draw up a life path for the incipient personality and soul, designed to allow for the individual's spiritual and moral growth in light of his or her Multiverse career. In the case of new souls, these discussions aren't necessary.

A life path should not be confused with the concept of predestination as it's normally viewed in the perennial debate opposing it to free will. A life path is not rigidly determined but is based on a series of conditional options. These options can be accepted or rejected in the course of a life, depending on unforeseen conditions. If the preplanned option is an important one and is rejected, it will reappear in a modified form throughout the individual's life, and into future compensatory lifetimes until the matter is finally resolved.

Freedom of choice exists in everyday matters, as it also exists in whether to choose to act on the planned option, the result of which will open up other

sets of choices.

Because a reincarnate has extensive preincarnation experience in previous lifetimes—many hundreds in Mein Host's case, as he was soon to find out—he is encouraged to participate in the discussion. The choice of a reincarnate's gender in the upcoming life is generally left up to the individual, as is the final word on the choice of parents. In this case, Mein Host insisted that his mother, the next time around, should be a more agreeable creature; that she needed to be a mature woman with her own life who did not smother or try to control him. And she should not be someone determined to work out her own ambitions through him.

Diana was the mother chosen.

This had required a certain amount of negotiation, because Diana was also a reincarnate, although she appeared completely unaware of it during her lifetime. Intriguingly for Mein Host—because she had frequently dismissed the idea of prior incarnations, and she claimed to have no belief in the afterlife—he found several books on reincarnation next to her bedside when he was clearing out her apartment after her death.

I say it required some discussion because Diana's life path, as it was planned prior to her birth in 1911, involved a conventional life of husband and family, with a series of options opening up if this wasn't chosen. When she was being surveyed as a potential parent for Mein Host, it became clear to the angels watching that her marriage to George would soon fail, forcing her to focus on working to support herself and her new baby son.

Given Diana's independent nature, it was generally believed that she would be able to rise to the challenge and that this would preoccupy her sufficiently to allow Mein Host the freedom to pursue his destiny free of her interference. When she felt compelled to intervene in his life, the angels believed that this could ultimately be made to work to both of their advantage. (I will be giving an example of this later in the narrative when it was necessary for Diana to confront her unconscious compulsion to take her revenge on the male species by depriving her baby son of his rightful food during the war years.)

By the time Mein Host announced that he was about to leave the country, never to return, Diana was well on her way to becoming a successful and independent businesswoman who loved and trusted him—and thus was able

to let him go with open arms. This represented a major shift in Diana's consciousness and allowed her to flourish in business and blossom as a woman who would later became a leader in her chosen profession.

If Mein Host, despite his bravado, thought he was breaking free of the effects of his mother's deeper and more repressed traumas, he would have been horrified to realize that he'd merely exchanged one mother for another. In Mary Ann he would find a far more demanding, ambitious, cruel, narcissistic version of the Mother, closer in personality type to the Greco-Roman goddess Hecate, who was associated with ghosts, hounds, witchcraft, and curses, and whose name Mary Ann later adopted.

Yet these were the early days of the community, when they were living in Nassau and looking for an island to start their social experiment in earnest. Mary Ann had become the dominating presence of the group, brilliantly psychic, magnetically charismatic, and seemingly caring. Yet for all that, little was known about her and she played this sense of mystery surrounding her to the hilt.

Settling into the beach chair for his most significant meditation so far, Mein Host knew nothing about Mary Ann's background. His barely repressed aversion to her remained as strong as ever, yet appeared to be equally matched by his almost obsessive fascination with this magnetic woman.

Yes, indeed, before that particular meditation, Mein Host was an extremely mixed-up young man.

* * *

When Dalamatia was finally destroyed by the tidal wave, the secession staff realized that there was no going back. If some of them had been harboring a silent hope that they'd be able to return to the city, apologize for their actions, and be taken back into MA's welcoming arms, this was a cruel awakening. They'd thrown their cards on the table, and now they had to live with their hands.

It was becoming clear that life among the tribes, a mere two centuries after the uprising, was already deteriorating faster than our efforts to control it. Some of us, mainly in the Watcher group, were starting to regret our decision to align with Caligastia, but we had no choice but to continue to play the cards we'd dealt ourselves.

Because I was among this group of Watchers, you might notice my observations becoming somewhat more acerbic as this story progresses. Angels have feelings, too. My sense of disillusionment and disappointment grew almost overwhelming as I watched Caligastia and his loyal staff, now referring to themselves as “freedom fighters,” together with their army of midwayers, dig themselves deeper and deeper into a pit of their own making.

One of the results of leaving the city was to liberate, if that is the right word, the staff from any of the strictures imposed on them by MA’s social engineers prior to the uprising. This rejection of the previous regime’s rules reached ridiculous heights as time-tested approaches, which had proved efficacious on 100,000 planets, were heedlessly thrown out for no other reason than that the rule was the product of the hated former administration.

The worst of this occurred in the area of our attempts to accelerate the level of the natives’ technological advancement. There had been such a prohibition on doing this during the previous regime that Nodu felt compelled to oppose it in every way possible. Even though all the staff members of Meka’s Council of Arts and Science, the sages of technological expertise, had stayed faithful to Vanu and the loyalist staff, Nodu pressed ahead with his policy of introducing his own better ways of devising weaponry.

Remembering, for example, the early failed attempts to introduce steam power and metal smelting and the terror both created in the natives, Nodu became convinced that the staff ’s great mistake was to back off. In his view, to accept docilely that the people weren’t ready for advancement had been a criminally delinquent act. He could become quite venomous when he talked about this lapse.

“If only the fools had continued to demonstrate what could be done with red-hot metal,” Nodu liked to loudly declaim. “If they’d have just pushed them harder, we wouldn’t be in this fix today. But Meka’s crew were cowards, afraid they’d step out of line. We’re going to do it differently. Oh, yes! We’re not going to back off! If we need to, we’re going to do it for them!” This was met by loud cheers all around.

With that, Nodu sent off the staff to work in pairs directly with the tribes and to brook no opposition from them. Rather than trying to persuade the natives to work with metal, the staff themselves should make the weapons. Sooner or later the natives would rise to the challenge. That was the hope,

anyway, and, in part, a justification, too, for taking such a radical and forbidden action.

“All we’re doing is speeding up the inevitable” became the mantra of the day.

This statement was based on a rational assessment of the naturally violent and warlike nature of the indigenous natives. The very idea of peace appeared completely foreign to them. This had been a constant problem. So much of the staff ’s time and attention in the previous regime was spent working through their human proxies, trying their hardest to prevent the inevitable intertribal clashes.

“Doing this was a shocking waste of our energy,” Nodu said. “We’re going to switch it around and work with the violent energies. If we can bring all that violence to a head, if we can bring it all out in the open, the natives will get it out of their systems. They’ll get tired of fighting. Then we can start organizing them the way we want.”

Indeed, this might have been an effective approach under certain conditions, but it was a heartless vision and one that required an appalling level of bloodshed. To Caligastia and his gang of immortals, the widespread death of the natives meant little: I suspect they’d forgotten what death meant —its finality for a mortal species, the terror it holds.

And even when they considered mortality in a more abstract sense, knowing that human life continues after death so colored their plans and theories that it might be seen as excusing their coldhearted brutality. As a consequence, over time they came to care nothing for the value of human life beyond how it could be used for their own purposes.

So it was in this troubled world, compounded and made far worse in this case by an unforeseen circumstance. I say *unforeseen,* but had they consulted one of us Watchers, we could well have warned them of what might occur. After all, we’d seen what was starting to happen to the staff. But by then they were far too set on their course of action to want to hear any opposing opinions from a “bunch of flimsy angels” (Nodu’s words).

“Don’t listen to them. They don’t know what it’s like to live down here— flitting around in another dimension. It’s all too easy for them to criticize us!”

Under this patronizing attitude lay a much deeper distrust of us. The staff

had never particularly liked the angels accompanying the mission. Perhaps it was a species issue, because the midwayers were different. They were closer to the staff in nature, as well as being their offspring. The staff trusted them in a way they never trusted us angels. I think they might have believed we were MA's secret agents, moles reporting back to Lanaforge's new administration about their activities.

While there might have been some truth in this before the uprising, it was no longer possible. And, believe me, I tried to reach Lanaforge's ministers, too, but we found that MA had isolated and cut off the spiritual circuits linking us to the higher realms. Where we did come into our own and prove our value to the staff was in our ability to travel to the other quarantined planets in this System. Neither the staff nor midwayers were able to do this, because their vehicles were materially linked to this world.

Lucifer and Satan made frequent visits during the first blush of the rebellion and brought news from the other planets, which they shared with the Princes, who then filtered a sanitized version down to the staff. As an observer, I was present at those angelic meetings, so I gained more realistic insight into the progress of the rebellion as a potentially Systemwide event.

Lucifer had clearly hoped to convert every single Planetary Prince in all the inhabited worlds to his System. When a mere thirty-seven Princes chose to side with him, it had been an unpleasant shock. He'd been so carried away by his own brilliant rhetoric and the persuasiveness of his arguments that it was hard for him to believe the response had been so meager. Much of the time in those meetings was taken up with Lucifer's angry complaints about this or that Planetary Prince—how much he'd done for them and look how they'd repaid him. He called them weaklings and cowards. He accused them of being addicted to sucking at MA's teats, of buying into MA's propaganda. He called them lazy for mindlessly following the traditional policies.

"Can't those idiot Princes see what's happening?!" His voice rising in our minds reached a painful pitch as he continued: "They're blinded by their own stupidity! How can I be expected to succeed with a mere handful of them behind me? Before MA clamped down with her heavy hand I had over 350 Princes with me. Now look what's happened! What kind of rebellion is that? The first sign of a little heat and they head for the security of MA's arms! We're going to show up those cowards for what they are!"

“Even if we are few,” Satan chimed in, trying to support his chief, “we will prevail! We can push our planets to advance faster and more effectively than anything MA can make happen. Then they’ll see what fools they’ve been to betray us. . . .”

Lucifer’s tirades could go on for hours, his moods swinging wildly between a whining complaint that he’d been betrayed by his Princes and his almost obsessive conviction that he would succeed if he could only get all his supporters to stand firm. They would wear down MA’s opposition. Oh, yes—he would show them all.

This wasn’t the bright and brilliant Lucifer of old, and Caligastia can scarcely be blamed for only passing on to the staff good news—how magnificently the rebellion was progressing, how strongly Lucifer was holding the energy in the palm of his hands, how we couldn’t fail if we just held firm, and how we’ve been discussing an alliance of free planets, which was going to strengthen our resistance when the time came.

There was never a word about when that time would come, however.

Ever since the uprising, the staff on both sides of the conflict were obsessed with obtaining news from the other thirty-six worlds, those whose Planetary Princes sided with Lucifer and the rebels. Vanu’s far smaller group of angels were being kept busy working on the planet, so they could afford only the occasional survey flight.

We thought we’d be better off. Immediately after the rebellion, Caligastia had instructed a number of us angels to maintain an ongoing surveillance of all the inhabited worlds in the System for signs that the rebellion was spreading.

It wasn’t.

Besides the thirty-seven Planetary Princes and their worlds, who immediately aligned themselves with Lucifer and Satan, much to Caligastia’s dismay, there was never any sign the rebellion was spreading further.

This news did not endear us to Caligastia or his staff, as you might imagine. After an unpleasant spate of blaming the messengers, they must have realized they still needed us for reports on the freedom fighters on the other thirty-six worlds, with whom they felt closely allied. As a result, they were forced to remain on courteous terms with us. Although both Lucifer and

Satan had made periodic appearances to consult with Caligastia and Daligastia about strategy, and had brought news of the other worlds with them, these visits became progressively more infrequent as time passed.

Therefore it fell to me to visit and report back on the activities of a nearby inhabited world, which turned out to be remarkably similar in development to this one, to Earth—which I surprised myself by thinking of as my home planet.

I'll call this neighboring world Zandana as the nearest approximation to their primary language, and it was similar because the indigenous natives on both planets were at approximately the same level of advancement. The one major difference I was able to report back was that the level of fear and violence was far less troubling on Zandana, and, as a consequence, the natives appeared generally easier to control.

It was similar to Earth, because a large part of the planet was covered with water, although in Zandana's case there were more island continents, each bounded by ocean. Most of the planetary population lived on one of the largest continental landmasses, which is where their Prince and his staff had established their headquarters.

A much higher proportion of the staff had sided with their Planetary Prince, in this case ninety-one out of the hundred, and all ninety-one of their modified mortal companions accompanied them. The majority of their midwayers also aligned themselves with their Prince, although not as many as had affiliated themselves with Caligastia in this world.

The more submissive nature of the natives on Zandana had persuaded their Prince that Lucifer's program of greater freedom was just what they needed to push innovation along faster and more effectively than previously. This conviction also turned many of their staff to the rebel cause.

Compared to the bitterness and resentment felt by Caligastia, Daligastia, and the majority of the secession staff on Earth toward Vanu and the loyalists, Zandana's Prince maintained an amicable relationship with the minority of his staff who had rejected Lucifer's plan. While there were heated disagreements between the two factions, it never devolved into the overt hostility we saw break out on this planet.

In this case, when the Melchizedek Receivers arrived to take over

Zandana's Seraphic Over-government, the small loyalist group was transferred by the Prince to one of the other continents. It was more sparsely inhabited than the large southern island upon which they had established their city. The group was willingly resettled and grateful for the blessing their Prince had bestowed on them. They'd managed to get his signature on a noninterference agreement that gave them a free hand to continue practicing the old ways on a particular piece of land they could call their own. Unlike what happened on Earth, the loyalist staff was permitted to stay on Zandana for the duration of their natural lives, before being recalled to the capital planet of the System.

This arrangement suited both Zandana rebels and loyalists alike in a manner entirely alien to the way Caligastia's staff regarded those who rejected him. Under Caligastia's regime, there were frequent skirmishes between the two sides from the start of the uprising, which had then developed into open hostility after their city was destroyed.

Caligastia was always a proud being, but when he proclaimed himself God of this world and demanded worship from the natives—although not from us Watchers, I should add—I believe everyone knew in their hearts that he'd gone too far. He'd committed the one sin regarded by MA as absolutely indefensible, that of attempting to usurp the place of the Creator in the hearts of men and women. For a while this amused us Watchers: he was such an inept god! He spent most of his time trying to impress both his staff and his rebel midwayers, forbidding worship of any god but him and trying to defend his self-proclaimed divinity.

"Is Nog any better than me?" the Prince would demand through one of his proxies. "Is *that* what you want them worshipping? A god of fire and human sacrifice? And then, a few valleys away, there's some sort of volcano god, and that fertility goddess cult we had to crush. And the bull god! These natives will make a god out of anything! It may as well be me. That way we can begin gathering them together."

This had made some sense at the time. If we chose to ignore this most fundamental of prohibitions, as most of the staff appeared willing to do, perhaps it would rid the natives of their ridiculous superstitions. As so many of MA's strictures applied to both the natives' technological advancement as

well as their religious belief systems, the staff had been growing increasingly irritated and frustrated with the natives' recalcitrance. It had always been stressed that early superstitions needed to be respected as a dawning of the religious urge in a primitive people. However absurd or bloodthirsty these invented "ghost gods" were, they and their followers were expected to be handled with great care by the staff.

Beware of impatience. We were all warned about it. There was no point in hurrying. We were assured in the Jerusem seminars that the natural human impulse to discover their Indwelling Spirits and to worship the Father God would ultimately supplant any superstitions as the millennia passed.

"Leave those primitive gods alone," we were told. "They will all disappear over time."

But then came the rebellion and everything changed.

12

A Goddess Enters the Game

Intractable Hostility, Death of Immortals, Rebirth of the Spirit, Self-Determination, and the Geography of Zandana

Just as Caligastia's staff had callously placed wagers on tribal warfare back when they were living in the city, so now, with their ability to become involved directly with the tribes of their choices, did they have their first direct experience of raw power. The playful competitiveness they'd experienced and inspired between the tribes in better times soon devolved into bitter feuding between different staff members. Even the justification of "doing it for the benefit of the tribes' advancement" had started to sound hollow. Now it was solely about the staff members' egos, their pride, their desire to be adored and worshipped as gods too by their tribespeople, their mysterious invulnerability, and their immortality.

Their immortality? Ah, yes, that fortuitous, biocosmic symbiosis that allowed the staff a deathless life, provided they continued to eat their ration of the Edentian shrub. What they hadn't been made aware of was exactly how the plant biochemically assimilated the incoming high-frequency cosmic rays, thus allowing them immortality. They believed it was merely the plant itself that rejuvenated them. I can only assume that they were kept in the dark about this as one of MA's subtle fail-safes, one of the ways they could check the effects of a planetary uprising in the rare event one were to break out.

The staff noticed some of the telltale signs of their bodies aging in the latter days of the city, when Vanu's loyalist midwayers were making it impossible for them to get to the plant. However, when Vanu's group finally left the city to its own devices, they'd taken seeds and cuttings from the shrub in case MA would later reactivate the incoming rays. Naturally, as a loyalist, Vanu had been made aware that the symbiosis no longer worked because the incoming rays had been shut down.

The rebel faction, on the other hand, did not know this simple truth or they likely would have thought it was another one of Vanu's tricks. Perhaps they simply didn't want to confront the prospect of their own mortality, so they carried what was left of the shrub on their journey northward. Regardless, as the years passed, and the few remaining cuttings not killed by the sea journey flourished briefly and then died, it became obvious the staff was getting steadily older.

The staff 's physical vehicles didn't age the same way as human bodies do: it was a far slower and more imperceptible process; as a result, they didn't start taking it seriously until three centuries later, when it became impossible to ignore. Another fifty years passed in feverish denial before the inescapable reality of their imminent deaths could no longer be suppressed. And what was going to happen to them after they'd cast off their bodies? They'd be back in the clutches of the Local Universe administrators, the very ones they had rebelled against. This they really did not want to think about!

During this sad and nervous time, all sixty members of the secession staff, and those of their modified mortal companions who'd chosen to stay with their clone masters, died within thirty-three years of the first death. They sometimes chose to expire in small groups; at other times two or three of them would die within one cycle of the moon. However alienated they'd become from one another in the times following the uprising, they'd lived so long and knew and loved each other in their own ways so deeply, that the funerals became agonizing rituals. This was aggravated by the dying staff 's fear of what might befall them in the after-death realms: their confidence diminished steadily with every group of deaths.

Possibly the worst of it was how these once brilliant beings actually died. It was not a quick process. Nodu, for example, spent over ten years suffering death agonies before he finally and painfully succumbed.

It seemed to me as though their ancient bodies, in their turn, were rebelling against their owners. The internal organs, rather than all giving up the ghost simultaneously, failed slowly, one by one, over time. Not having a body of the same material, I could only imagine what a slow torture it must have been. Each organ atrophied in turn, decaying and ultimately expiring, without killing the overall vehicle.

The staff 's bodies, designed and grown by the Avalon surgeons, were for

obvious reasons broadly patterned on the indigenous native model. One of the prime modifications the gene splicers were most proud of was a bioelectrical subsystem that sustained the body in the event of organ injury. While this ingenious development, which rerouted electrical impulses even if an organ was irreparably damaged, was essential to deal with personal injury over their long lives, it made their unanticipated physical death all the more horribly painful.

Nodu and Böni, who elected to die together, seemed to be the worst affected and took the longest to expire. As their internal organs collapsed, starting with the least relevant for survival, the subsystem took over, maintaining a semblance of life in the dying vehicle. Because their brains were the last to fail, they had no choice but to experience this agonizing process of physical disintegration, from which there was no escape.

Some did contemplate suicide, but it was such a taboo subject among exceptionally long-lived beings that none of them could face the prospect of killing themselves, nor could they summon the courage to arrange a mutual murder-suicide pact.

I don’t believe any of the dying staff were fully aware of it—at least I never overheard any of them claiming it—but I sensed they felt that in submitting to such terrible deaths they were atoning in some way for their sins. On the surface it seemed all to be about pride: they had become so addicted to living that they weren’t going to give up without a fight.

There were two important factors, however, which at least gave them in their dying days the delusion that their work might continue into the future. They achieved a pledge from the midwayers to persevere to the best of their abilities with everything the staff had introduced.

However, it was on their biological children that they placed their most immediate demands.

Their biological children?

Yes, indeed, the staff had had their fun before they expired.

When the staff had finally accepted that they were no longer immortal, Caligastia had issued an edict instructing the members of his staff to mate with humans. He knew there was a biological compatibility between the staff ’s constructed bodies and the human genome, because MA’s future ideas for

the planet had included creating a race of humans who were to be the direct progeny of the staff. Then those selected bloodlines would be carefully nurtured through the centuries. Except this was intended to happen in the far distant future, well after the next two or three of MA's missions had arrived and completed their work.

Like all the other plans Caligastia was attempting to implement, this was a massive and completely premature acceleration of MA's social engineering. While these matings and the resultant progeny had some immediate positive effects in helping the staff control the increasingly rowdy tribes, in the end it was just another wasted opportunity.

Granted, the children of these matings were magnificent creatures. They were tough and resilient and exceptionally long-lived, some flourishing for more than a thousand years. They became legendary; they were the giants, their feats of strength and leadership passing down through the generations of humans in the myths and stories of the "great men of old."

Yet, however long-lived the staff 's children, and their children's children, they were all thoroughly mortal. They lived and died like everyone else. When they were long dead and gone, their genetic gift would be thoroughly diluted by centuries of interbreeding and consequently would have little or no value at a time when the genetic infusion would be really needed.

With the staff and their children gone, there was just Caligastia, Daligastia, and their 40,119 rebel midwayers left to walk the planet to do what they could to subvert Vanu and Amadon's work in the foothills of the mountains of northern India. And, of course, there were still some observing angels present—many fewer now since the transitional angels had been called home. There were even some of the observing angels—Watchers like myself—who must have found a way to leave their posts and plead their cases before Lanaforge's courts, because they, too, disappeared.

I was tempted, naturally. It was impossible to ignore how bad the situation had become on the planet. For all our good intentions, it seemed as if everything we implemented, sooner or later, failed to come to fruition. Throughout the Arabian Peninsula, and stretching for several hundred miles east and west, constant tribal conflicts ravaged the countryside, with tribespeople cutting down the trees and leveling the small settlements. In some places the sands were already starting to reclaim the previously verdant

landscape.

In spite of all the damage Caligastia's edicts had caused, Vanu managed to establish more than three hundred settlements, mainly in the Indian subcontinent and China. Also, South America hosted a number of such settlements. Some of these groups flourished and grew into great civilizations, like the ones you know as Lemuria and Atlantis, before disappearing under the oceans.

A pattern emerged over the millennia of a culture blossoming, bright and full of promise, only to decay prematurely from within or be overrun by an invading force or fall into the ocean. Can Caligastia be held responsible for all these disasters? He certainly attempted to be a constant presence—a god to some, a demon to others. With a multitude of names and forms and with the invisible help of his faithful midwayers, he milked as much adoration as he could, as he simultaneously sowed fear and terror across the world.

Vanu did his best to fulfill the goals and keep the faith of the original mission. Yet, as the centuries passed and Vanu's settlements expanded, he and Amadon found it increasingly difficult to convince the indigenous natives of the reality of an Unseen God. Rather than see the natives revert to the worship of their tribal gods, and yet realizing these primitive mortals needed a physical focus for their worship, they started encouraging a veneration for the sun, Father Sun. Later, when a female element demanded to be expressed in more balanced cultures—like Lemuria—the Moon, or Mother Earth, also became the focus of worship.

Vanu had deliberately engineered these religions as a way of keeping Caligastia at bay. He also emphasized the understanding that Caligastia was unable to enter any human consciousness unless freely invited in.

"Focus your desire to worship," he would tell the people. "Focus it on the Sun, Moon, or Earth. See how they bring us life—how Father Sun warms us and how generous Mother Earth is to bring us life. May they always remind you of the Unseen Father who lives in your hearts." He was well aware that humans possess what MA has called a "worship circuit," which is embedded in the spiritual body of all mortals.

These worship circuits continue to exist, whether or not they're repressed or denied. The desire to revere what is greater than the self runs deep in the human personality. If it's not a God who is worshipped then the object of

reverence will likely be “displaced”—to use a psychological term—on some material substitute for Divinity. In a materialist era, this can mean money or possessions; in a more superstitious time, it will be which god, or gods, that tribe habitually worshipped.

“And the most dangerous substitute is he who calls himself God of this world. Do not be deluded by Caligastia. He’s the father of lies—the great deceiver. Do not fall under his spell.” So Vanu preached as he traveled his territory. “There will come a day when you will no longer have me to remind you. You must love and be grateful to Father Sun and Mother Earth, and the good life they bring you.”

Yet, as the millennia passed and human nature reasserted itself, Caligastia increasingly became identified in various human religions as the devil. He became God’s opposition, the adversary, and a convenient device for a manipulative priestcraft, as well as a creature of human nightmares.

The Devil.

The archetype of pure evil.

Not quite the God that Caligastia might have seen himself. I’d like to think the irony of having to settle for merely “getting the best lines” hasn’t been lost on him.

* * *

It was a warm tropical evening in Nassau as the community settled down into a silent meditation. The courtyard with the pool at one end was large enough to fit all of them on a variety of deck and beach chairs. Some laid back, while others sat up in formal meditation poses. Mein Host adjusted his chair so he could sit upright and closed his eyes.

The group fell silent as a soft breeze rustled the palm leaves.

Mein Host has described what happened next elsewhere, so not being privy to his mind and his visions, what I am able to describe is what I observed occurring in his subtle energy bodies.

The changes happened with remarkable speed. I’d seen Mein Host’s companion angels arranging something shortly before the meditation, but I have no access to their thoughts or actions, either, unless they wish it to be so. So I was astonished when I saw his emotional and mental bodies suddenly

change color and tone so soon after the lad had relaxed into meditation. Then all the colors in his aura started swirling in a way I'd never seen before. They settled out into a graceful spiraling movement flowing from his spiritual body in the deepest indigo-violet, caressing his mental body in cerulean blue and light aquamarine, before turning in to a translucent moss green and looping in an endless moebius current of energy back up to the spiritual.

I could only imagine what might have been happening within Mein Host's consciousness! I'd never seen such an extraordinarily rapid change. And then, just as suddenly, I could see.

Mein Host had left his physical body and shifted into a proximate frequency domain, finding himself, to his horror, being hurled hither and thither, bouncing off submerged rocks, struggling against the wild current, gasping for breath, before being sucked under again into the churning maelstrom; then he was turning over and over, somersaulting under water, bruised and bumped by blows from bouncing boulder to boulder.

When he surrendered to the river and allowed himself to drown, he relaxed, gratefully filling his lungs with water—cool, clear, water . . .

Water that, as I watched, turned to light. Then, as I lost sight of him in the brilliance, I caught a momentary glimpse of his angels surrounding him with images. The light strobed so brightly I had to turn away.

In one of those delightful angelic sleights of hand, just as Mein Host was typing the previous paragraph at precisely (as recorded on the e-mail) 7:24:39 p.m. MDT on May 21, 2010, Mein Host received a post from Nikola Kael on his computer, quoting a Hopi Elder and saying, in part: "There is a river flowing now very fast. It is so great and swift that there are those who will be afraid. They will try to hold on to the shore. They will feel they are being torn apart and will suffer greatly.

"Know that the river has its destination. The Elders say we must let go of the shore, push off into the middle of the river, and keep our hearts open and our heads above water."

When I looked back, the bright flashes had dimmed and Mein Host was back in his physical vehicle appearing stunned by what had just happened. He lay back trying to make sense of what was by far the most profoundly reality-smashing and spiritual experience up to this point in his life. He hadn't taken

entheogens for years, and it was not an acid flashback. Nor was it a mere visual hallucination: it had fully engaged all his senses. It was undeniable and infused with a power far beyond his comprehension. He'd met, he would say later, the implacable power of the Goddess and had no choice but to submit to it as gracefully as he could.

As it turned out, the river was only the start of his experience. What I was not able to see when I had to turn away from the light was something his companion angels must have been orchestrating for their own purposes.

Companion seraphim always work closely with cherubim and sanobim when caring for their human wards. In terms of the angelic hierarchy, cherubim and sanobim are at the lowest level. Apart from the midwayers, who are not truly regarded as angels, the cherubim and sanobim are closest to mortal in nature—although, of course, very different, too. Both these two groups of angels possess the same essential spiritual endowment as seraphim and can be thought of as the seraph's junior partners. These are also the angels humans will first encounter when they pass through the after-death realms.

When I hear humans talking about having a "good angel on one shoulder and a bad angel on the other," I believe they are referring to the functions of cherubim and sanobim within the individual person's life journey. Angels' interests are primarily spiritual. Yet much of their time is spent cooperating with other angels to facilitate situations—both positive and negative—in which their wards are presented with the choices that give them the opportunity to grow in spirit or, alternatively, to learn from the errors of their ways.

Normally one of the two seraphim functions as the recording angel, but the cherubim are the ones who keep the records and who will be showing them to you after your death. And lest you confuse cherubim with those fat, little, winged babies beloved of sentimentalized Christian iconography, you will be surprised to learn that they are highly intelligent, have delightful senses of humor, and will look very much like you.

Unlike human-invented digital recorders, angels are selective in what they record. They focus on what is true and meaningful to the individual; the incidents and people he or she has loved; the moments of profound transformation and spiritual insight; all they've learned that will be of value

to them as they survey their lives with their companion angels soon after their physical death. Angels record and show negative events when individuals need to learn a spiritual or emotional lesson from observing their actions relayed back, allowing them to see and experience the consequences of their harmful acts on others.

In my ward's case there was no afterlife review, no comments from angels, no sense of being dead. I heard him later comparing what he'd seen while he was out of his body as being similar to people who have Near Death Experiences and return claiming to have seen "their life flash before their eyes."

In Mein Host's case,apparently it was lives—not *life*, but *lives*. Many, many *lives*. In fact, he was shown all his prior incarnations—hundreds of them, one after another, click, flash, click, flash, click, flash—filling his inner vision, as he said later, with an explosion of memories. Memories so fleeting they dissolved within moments and yet left a comet's trail of remembrance, which has lasted to this day.

But it was never really about the memories, was it?

This was the first clearly transcendent confirmation of what he'd only previously received the occasional hint. Now he had no doubt that he was a reincarnate. But this also wasn't something about which he was ever going to talk too openly. There was nothing grandiose about it. Nothing he felt like bragging about. It was a humbling experience, nothing to be particularly proud of. He'd simply been around a really long time—that's all.

If he'd left the situation there, matters might have turned out differently.

When he finally opened his eyes and looked around the courtyard, it was dark and all the chairs were empty except one. Mary Ann lay back on a beach chair next to the pool.

Mein Host pulled himself off the chair and limped on shaking legs over to Mary Ann and knelt down beside her. Her green eyes were open, and she placed her hand gently on his arm as they looked at each other in silence.

"Mary Ann, were you the river?"

"Yes." She replied without missing a beat, still looking at him straight in the eyes.

"Yes," she repeated with a quiet certainty, "I was the river."

Think of those long centuries between the time of the angelic rebellion and the dawning of the “modern” historical era as the true Dark Ages. It wasn’t the Golden Age the ancients believed preceded them, nor was it exactly the Satya Yuga, the Era of Truth, in which Hindus believe humanity was ruled by gods and the period they regard as the pinnacle of human culture, from which humankind has steadily declined.

Neither were there enlightened matriarchal societies that contemporary feminists like to believe contrasted with male patriarchal dominance. No such luck, I’m sad to say. Lemuria, as we’ll come to see, was the most spiritually advanced society on the planet for many thousands of years, yet it was no matriarchy. Even in the most balanced of cultures the male of your species has almost always dominated his womenfolk through physical strength and the threat of violence.

There were heroes, of course, and short periods of peace from time to time in different parts of the globe that the expanding human population had now reached. But in light of the mission’s original intent, it can be considered as 203,300 years of constant conflict.

Despite Vanu and his assistant’s considerable efforts to keep the forlorn mission going as originally planned, Caligastia seemed to be everywhere, subverting their plans and corrupting their achievements. He set clan against clan, tribe against tribe, and, finally, race against race, as the human population increased in size.

Caligastia and his midwayers encouraged the natives to return to their terrifying ideas and images of gods and goddesses. Soon the rebel midwayers were starting to use their powers to reinforce tribal superstitions and to favor certain individuals over others with their support. The midwayers played on and preyed on the natives’ natural fear of ghosts, using their ability to influence and intervene in material reality to create the appearance of miraculous events.

From a mortal point of view, the central theme of the Lucifer manifesto was his call for the “liberty of individual self-determination,” and it was this notion that Caligastia and his staff had been championing in all their dealings with the tribes. By the time the staff had died, all the tribes falling under

Caligastia’s influence had become far more hierarchical. As the human settlements expanded and tribes merged and fought and recombined into even larger groups, power, rather than mere day-to-day survival, became the dominating influence in the life of most humans.

The staff ’s children perpetuated this condition, often by becoming the hereditary rulers of their people or by using their unusual abilities to empower a powerful priest caste to hold their followers in a thrall of fear.

These ruling families well knew by this time that one of the most terrifying aspects of life for early men and women was dreaming, and in particular, nightmares. Over time dreams and waking life became all of a piece, ghosts slipping from one reality into the other and back again. This was the midwayers’ territory, of course, and I watched them taking a perverse pleasure in manipulating what came to be known as the ghost dream, in favor of this or that king or ruler.

Many of us angels watched these actions with some horror. This wasn’t what we’d bargained for when we signed on with Caligastia. The idea of giving more freedom to mortals to work out their own destinies sounded good when Nodu, or one of the others, proclaimed it, because we knew something had to be done to break the impasse we’d reached with the natives. But the sort of manipulation we were starting to see Caligastia’s crew practicing became an out-and-out infringement on a mortal’s God-given freedom of choice.

Granted, it had been an exhausting and frustrating time for the couple of centuries prior to the uprising in which it seemed that progress had slowed to a halt. Fear and superstition had proved far stronger than anyone had anticipated, and although much was made of the small successes, many of the staff had long become demoralized. I’m sure their loss of personal confidence was a contributing factor in the decision by so many of them to support the new regime.

As I’ve already said, we knew within a few centuries of the uprising that the rapid acceleration we’d introduced had backfired in a series of unintended and unforeseen consequences. But there was no going back. My own assessment was that Caligastia simply had to make it work somehow—his pride compelled him to prove the righteousness of Lucifer’s cause, even if he had to resort to some dirty tricks to achieve it.

Those long centuries were a fearful time for humans. Even in the few settlements being nurtured by Vanu and his loyalists there was a constant threat of the corrupting influence of Caligastia's midwayers. Yet the worst of it was displayed in the deliberate dissension constantly being stirred up between increasingly power-hungry tribal leaders. Firmly believing in Lucifer's ideology of greater freedom, Caligastia had soon recognized that the most effective way of accelerating social and technological growth was to set tribe against tribe and then stand back and watch human nature at work.

As the millennia passed, larger and larger tribal groupings faced off, and the vanquished ones were driven into new and unknown territories. As more centuries followed, the survivors of the defeated—toughened by the harsh conditions in the outlands and whipped, with Caligastia's help, into a paroxysm of hatred—then descended and ravaged the great cities of their former enemy, who had by now grown fat, rich, and arrogant in their victory. Then, some centuries later, the victors—having interbred with the women of the conquered, and, like their predecessors, by now grown fat and lazy—happen to leave their fighting to mercenaries. This will be a sure sign of decline. The situation will then be reversed, and the formerly virile victors will, in turn, be vanquished.

As you can appreciate, this pattern established such a continuing web of interlocking tribal and racial enmity that it has continued to reverberate down through the millennia and into the present day. While not originating in quite such ancient times, the intractability of the Jewish/Arab conflict is an apt example of this pattern.

Working with the remnants of the supermortal bloodlines, the midwayers, in consultation with Caligastia or his assistant, selected certain individual humans, or specific tribal groups, for their ambition and cunning; some for their greed and duplicity; and some for their callous indifference to the suffering of others. These were the sort of personalities with whom Caligastia could work. Many of those offspring developed into the great ruling families, the immensely wealthy trading clans, and, most important, the priests and priestesses.

This direct intervention produced yet another resurgence of city building, this time with technology illicitly introduced by Caligastia and his

midwayers. Just as he had supported Lucifer's call for greater freedom for the mortals in his System, Caligastia appeared to be convinced that humans should also have access to much of the midwayers' occult information.

This period was also the start of a slow deterioration of the solidarity that had been sustaining the midwayers and allowed Caligastia to work with them as one coherent force. Inevitably, there had always been minor conflicts and disagreements among the midwayers, but nothing that Caligastia couldn't settle when he needed them to work together.

However, when individual midwayers had invested so much of their time and energy in their pet projects, relating in their own subtle ways to their chosen humans, they found themselves gradually becoming more individualized. It was this increased individualization that compounded their problems so disastrously.

As a species, midwayers are born to the Prince's staff into a relatively choiceless environment. I say "relatively choiceless" because midwayers need to retain a higher degree of personal autonomy in order to deal with mortal emergencies. Yet, similar to angels, they are created as functional beings, and as such, under normal planetary situations, they don't face a wide range of individual choices. They don't need to—their functions will invariably dictate their choices.

Now these same midwayers had been thrown into a situation for which they were emotionally and mentally completely unprepared. In many ways this lack of self-awareness contributed directly to the levels of emotional immaturity that proved to be their ultimate downfall. They split into smaller and smaller clans, spreading over the face of the world, their actions becoming more idiosyncratic and self-serving as generations of humans came and went.

Because midwayers could be considered to be in a semimaterial state of being, they were capable under certain conditions of communicating directly into the minds of chosen humans. This is where the priest and priestess castes received their power, building up a whole variety of different religious traditions as guided by one or another of these clans of mischievous midwayers. Why *mischievous*? Because by this time most of the rebel midwayers had simply given up, or forgotten all about, their basic function—that of caring for mortals. Many even adopted Caligastia's prideful and

superior attitude toward humans, which was reinforced by the ease with which they could persuade the natives to worship and make sacrifices to them.

Animal and human sacrifice had long been practiced by the natives as a way of attempting to propitiate the spirits they believed were behind the natural events that terrorized them. Thunder and lightning; floods and earthquakes; the fire that spewed out of volcanoes; tsunamis, forest fires, and tornadoes; the constant threat of wild animals and predatory tribes—all this unpredictability had to be accounted for and somehow placated.

Although the midwayers had no more control over such violent natural geophysical events than the natives, if it served their purposes they were all too willing to be believed responsible for wreaking devastation. Every season that the natives weren't swept up in a tornado, for example, their tornado god and his priests and priestesses would be richly rewarded for their successful intercession with their god. If the day came, as it always does, when the tornado did do its damage, then it was all too easy to play upon the guilt and fear of the people, making their lack of worshipful adoration the cause of it. In this way the natives could be held in a form of mental and emotional dependence, which was easily manipulated, in this case, by the tornado god's priests or priestesses.

So it was over the many subsequent millennia. The same tired pattern Caligastia had set in motion so long ago in hopes of producing a truly advanced and free global culture was repeated over and over. A particular warlord would emerge, and, supported by a group of midwayers, he would gather an army to fight and subjugate all opposition. By killing some and enslaving vast numbers of prisoners, the warlord—now the ruler of all he surveyed—would then start building for his legacy, for his family, and to enhance his reputation.

Settlements had led to villages, which were then absorbed into towns, and with the invasions of the warlords came the fortified defenses, the castles, and the city walls. This was a time when empires, great and small, rose and fell with appalling regularity. Some of these empires became comparatively advanced before they were reduced to rubble by their successors. Yet, however technologically advanced they grew, it was always the same story. Some catastrophe—natural or human-made—would bring them to their

knees. In some cases an empire nurtured by Caligastia, and the few midwayers still under his control, became so overbearingly powerful that it would be destroyed wholesale, as had the tidal wave that obliterated all remnants of Dalamatia, our beautiful city.

However, there would always be a few survivors to any of these disasters, and something of the previous empire's cultural and technical expertise would get passed along—sometimes to be built upon, mostly to be lost. Yet this rhythm of an empire's slow growth, followed by a violent catastrophe that all but wiped it out, was spectacular enough for many indigenous legends to speak of four of these cataclysms as the "ending of the first four worlds."

It's probably a fruitless exercise to try to compare what might have occurred had there never been a rebellion, with the chaos and madness of those many long and tedious millennia. If progress had been slow and steady, as MA's policies had required, all I can say is that it would have been a very different world.

Yet, I do feel there was something to be gained from what I was able to learn on my occasional trips to Zandana, the neighboring planet I referred to previously. Because I'm somewhat exceeding my brief here, I will keep my observations on Zandana brief and sufficiently opaque that the planet cannot be readily recognized. I wouldn't want to unknowingly violate any obscure interplanetary protocol.

I believe the main difference between the way the two worlds compare with one another can be found in the personalities of the two Planetary Princes. Whereas Caligastia seemed driven by pride and resentment, Zandana's Prince, possibly because of the overwhelming support he'd received from his staff and midwayers, had appeared far more measured in his plans for his planet.

Because all eleven continents on Zandana were surrounded by ocean, this —combined with the natives' natural submissiveness—had made them far easier to oversee and control. As a consequence, their Prince didn't feel the need to artificially accelerate the pace of Zandana's technological progress. Also, without the constant challenge of an effective opposition after their loyalists had been removed, there was never the same focus on warfare and its inevitable corollary, an arms race, on Zandana.

This is not to say that the endless millennia of the natives' slow and steady

progress on Zandana wasn’t also colored by some violence, but it was far more localized. As the indigenous population was spread over the many continents, this allowed the dominating clans and tribes on each island to develop in a relatively autonomous and nonthreatening manner.

The frequent storms that battered the coastlines of the isolated continents had discouraged the natives from building oceangoing boats. Sadly, this had led the natives of Zandana to regard their ocean with fear—indeed, as a subject not to be openly spoken about. So firmly ingrained was this taboo that even the fishermen who laid their nets in the rivers and inland lakes on the islands were, on each continent, drawn from the lowest caste and were the only ones permitted to build their own coracles.

Although I didn’t observe it for myself, I suspect that the midwayers on Zandana had more than a hand in reinforcing this taboo, since it was so firmly held among the natives on all the continents. Apart from the small conflicts that erupted every once in a while when the succession line on one of the islands collapsed and rival families fought for dominance, life in general was far more peaceful than during the same period on Earth.

The insularity of the continents and the greater regimentation of the caste system, which was firmly in place on most islands by the time I first visited soon after the rebellion, tended to create exceptionally tradition-bound cultures. Endless generations of natives were born, lived, mated, and died within the same castes. As such, life was also far less demanding, with a limited range of choices. I’ve been told by a colleague that there was something slightly humorous in this. All in all, she told me, life appeared to be going so smoothly it was as if the rebellion had never hit Zandana, as though it had never happened.

Observing this phenomenon, so different from the constant territorial conflicts on Earth, I was inclined to believe that the geography of Zandana served its Prince well. Because of the contained aspect of their territories, hereditary lines of kingship lasted for thousands of years longer than on Earth. The longevity of these hereditary rulers, cruel and unpleasant as some were, provided a certain stability with which the Prince and his midwayers could effectively work. Because these eleven well-defined territories developed relatively independently, this also allowed for a higher degree of experimentation in approaches to governance. This would always get a

sardonic sneer from Caligastia when I reported back on my findings, and he'd make some remark about Prince Zanda having all the breaks. And, as often as not, this would be followed by an hour-long tirade of angry complaints about MA's selection process.

I can write now what I couldn't bring myself to say in those terrifying outbursts—that Caligastia's overweening ambition to prove himself worthy in Lucifer's eyes was going to bring the whole enterprise down. I had no doubt about this, but, of course, there was no telling him—or the others, for that matter. For the midwayers, Caligastia was their God: they had always worshipped him and would doubtless try to serve him without question to the end. Whatever that meant.

However, some of us Watchers were becoming progressively more skeptical as time passed and as we observed the growing derangement of our noble leader's personality.

That was when I started fearing for our future.

⁂

Mein Host's inner life was transformed yet again on that warm, lush evening in Nassau. His experience in the meditation—of drowning in the river and being shown his prior incarnations—was so overwhelmingly powerful that the colors and tones of his subtle energy bodies were in turmoil, before they settled into a new configuration a couple of days later.

What am I saying here? For as long as I'd known Mein Host, his primary attention was shared between his mental and physical intelligences. His reservations, including all his concerns and suspicions about Mary Ann, were firmly lodged in his mental intelligence and were fed by his immature emotional intelligence. His spiritual intelligence was almost entirely shut down. After the meditation, this emphasis changed. There was little attention remaining on the physical, and his mental intelligence seemed partially silenced. The profound difference lay in the swirling pastel colors streaming between his emotional and spiritual intelligences. Both these latter two intelligence systems had been singularly undeveloped up to that point, and I could only stand back and observe the shift with growing admiration. I never would have expected this change could occur in this fashion. I can only assume the incident must have been facilitated by his angels in conjunction

with his Indwelling Spirit, because it was the last plan I would have counseled, had I been asked.

Which, of course, I wasn't.

I'm only permitted to observe and learn from Mein Host's life, unless I am specifically required and instructed to intervene, as I was when I comforted his child's etheric body as the bombs were falling. But, on a normal, day-to-day basis, I can only observe.

Yet when I saw this profound transformation taking place in the lad, I was forced to reevaluate my view of the purpose of Mary Ann and the Process in his life and why he'd been so evidently guided back into the community's fold.

He felt quite certain that when Mary Ann answered his question about the river in the affirmative she knew exactly what he was asking.

"Yes, I am the river," she claimed.

"Yes, I am the Goddess," he heard.

Back in London, before Mein Host had moved to the Bahamas, I'd listened to some tentative talk about Mary Ann being a goddess when Mein Host was relaxing with a favored handful of the women in Mary Ann's inner circle. Mary Ann hadn't been present, and they were trying to explain to themselves who this remarkable woman might be. The women had been thrilled by the concept. Imagine—a goddess among them!

"What if it's true?" one asked in a hushed silence. "What if we really do have an incarnate goddess among us?!"

At the time Mein Host had thought it was an utterly ridiculous idea. How could she be a goddess? Besides, he'd protested, he didn't even know what a goddess was; and he certainly couldn't see how Mary Ann could ever be one.

"Sure, she's an unusual woman—an amazing woman, unlike anyone I've ever met. But a goddess? I don't think so."

With that he had promptly forgotten about it, only to have found himself having an ecstatic conversion months later.

There'd been no denying the utter reality of the experience. It was the most profound spiritual revelation of Mein Host's life, and, because it occurred when he was in a normal state of consciousness, he wasn't able to dismiss it

as the result of an entheogenic trance. There'd been no stepping outside the intensity of the experience. The river was utterly real—more real, if anything, than consensus reality. Drowning and breathing in great gulps of water felt to him as though his lungs were filling with real liquid.

Within the experience, he knew without any doubt that he had met and surrendered to the indomitable force of Divinity. He noted afterward in his journal that he had no conscious idea where the question he posed to Mary Ann had come from. It just spilled out of his mouth. And it was only when she answered, claiming to be the river, that it all came together for him. But it was the experience itself that opened his spiritual eyes—not Mary Ann's claim—and he seemed more than willing to go along with it.

I also noticed that he kept silent, except of course to Mary Ann, about the visions of his prior incarnations. Although he'd been prepared for this concept by some of the earlier incidents with a few of the others back in the apartment he'd shared with Jean, what he'd beheld when all those lifetimes flashed before his inner eyes was of a different order entirely. How it had occurred he had no idea. He also didn't know why it had happened, just that it had taken place, with a supreme clarity and carrying an undeniable tone of truth.

Mary Ann was another matter. Whether she was a goddess, or indeed, *the* Goddess, was of a great deal less importance to him than what he'd seen and experienced.

Over the following few weeks he remained in this wide-open state, and it seemed to him that he'd been wordlessly invited into what he could only describe as a sacred space. He was perceiving Mary Ann in a completely different way, and although he was never comfortable with thinking of her as the Goddess, the overwhelming power of the revelation he received that tropical evening confirmed for him that he was on the right path.

As if to reinforce his new state of consciousness, an event occurred some three weeks later—one so palpable that for all its rational improbability that it was hard for the dozen or so witnesses to dismiss what they saw with their own eyes.

It happened early one weekday afternoon, when those of the community who worked in downtown Nassau returned to the house for lunch and a chance to relax for the couple of hours allowed by local businesses for a

siesta. After a light lunch of fruit, Mein Host, who was working in a local architect's office, was relaxing back into a deck chair in the courtyard, fully conscious and awake. The pool glistened in the sun more than a dozen feet away. Perhaps a dozen or so members of the community, some lying back, others sitting up and still eating, were distributed around the courtyard on other deck chairs.

Here I can only describe what I observed, which was strange enough, and put it together with what I heard Mein Host talking about after the event. But before that, let me clear up some facts of Multiverse life that I have hinted at previously. I say this as a preamble because in a scientific, materialistic culture, it will strike some as impossible, some as a fabrication or self-delusion, and others perhaps as an unpleasant precursor to a surveillance society.

Mortals, individual human beings, are of infinitely greater value to God and the Multiverse than you can have any idea. As you may have gathered from this narrative, angels are always present, guiding, coordinating, and caring for the spiritual well-being of their wards. Then, of course, there are Watchers like myself who, while not companion angels, affiliate ourselves with particular mortals, those who have specific tasks to accomplish in the course of their lives that are considered of spiritual benefit to the Multiverse. In fact, there are as many as two billion angels functioning in this world at any one time.

Strange as this might seem to the modern mind, all this will become clear to you when you die, move from this reality, and find yourself surrounded by spirits and angels. You will appreciate why we choose to remain in the background of your worldly lives; the way we support your choices for the good, true, and beautiful; how we coordinate and facilitate "chance" meetings and the so-called synchronicities; and how we try to help you face and accept the worst aspects of yourselves.

In short, as bearers of the Indwelling Father Spirit, you are all loved more than you can imagine by the angels who attend you.

Recognizing how much humans are valued by the inner realms of the angels, it should come as no surprise that you are also of great interest to the outer realms of the Multiverse. On any given day there are between fifty and a hundred extraterrestrial races coming and going, whose focus of interest is

Earth. These nonhuman visitors exist in different, slightly higher, frequency domains and can stay there observing this planet and yet remain completely undetectable to you unless they choose to reveal themselves.

The Dal universe, for example, which visitors from the Pleiades cluster claim through the Swiss contactee Billy Meier to be one of the main reasons they travel to this world, is described as being a fraction of a second out of synchrony with your frequency domain.

In a more recent encounter Mein Host had with a female entity hailing from star system Arcturus, the entity explained how the Arcturians exist in the fifth dimension and have to adjust their energies to move down through the fourth to the third dimension in order to enter our frequency domain. And although Mein Host wouldn't have had the appropriate information in 1966 to talk in terms of different dimensions as he sat around that pool in Nassau, I heard him describing the following event afterward as "coming from a deeper place."

Indeed, he didn't consciously know where the initial thought came from that cloudless tropical afternoon in Nassau. He said afterward that he was musing on something altogether different. He said he "suddenly was aware of a large spaceship" far above him and invisible—but no less real to him for its invisibility. Although the thought came "out of the blue," as he liked to say, it was so outlandish that he didn't take it too seriously.

"Okay. If you're really there," he said loudly (and thoughtlessly) in his mind, "if you're really there, then show me what you know. Give it to me!"

The arrogance of the boy! He had no idea what he was doing, because moments later he was flying through the air to land with a loud splash in the middle of the swimming pool five yards away.

Mysterious, yet undeniable. His flight was witnessed by others as he was lofted, still lying flat, to fly soundlessly through the air before landing on his back in the pool.

Both of these experiences—the implacable force of the river and the raw power of whatever it was that threw him into the pool—forced him to realize that he was confronting some formidable energies. And although neither incident involved entheogens, he told his friends afterward that he was more than grateful to have had some experience with mind-altering substances

before this; otherwise, he would have started doubting his sanity.

Yet, to Mein Host, both incidents were undeniable confirmations that he was just starting to open up to what lay beneath the flimsy veneer of consensus reality.

13

The God of This World

Lucid Dreaming with ETs, Angelic Protection, Invention of Money, Silk Road, and Enter the Banksters

I'd become so disenchanted with Caligastia and his midwayers that I applied for permission to spend more time on Zandana rather than on Earth. I'd given some serious thought to turning myself over to MA, but ultimately I realized that they'd just relocate me somewhere else. Beneath all my concerns I found I was still too deeply interested in watching how matters were going to evolve in Lucifer's domain. Taking that into account, I was relieved to receive my new orders, allowing me to stay on Zandana for an unlimited period, on condition that I return to Earth when I'm recalled.

By the time I returned to Zandana, the various race wars—mere skirmishes compared to the massive genocides I'd witnessed on Earth—had largely subsided on the islands. On some continents the assimilation was sufficiently advanced that the different races were cooperating and socializing easily together. So I decided to join a group of angels whose responsibilities lay in nurturing what was starting to become a promising young civilization on one of the isolated southern continents.

As time passed, this southern island had pulled ahead of its neighbors. Of all the continents it was the best suited to agriculture. High, dormant volcanoes dominated the center of the island, catching the rain and spilling it down to the fertile lowlands. Waterfalls half a mile high poured down precipitous escarpments to the wooded slopes below. The climate was temperate, and the well-irrigated fields, arranged in velvet-green terraces, were already producing a wide variety of crops.

The Prince had chosen this island for its beauty when originally deciding where to site their city. Because the transition on Zandana was so much smoother than Caligastia's takeover on Earth, and the ambitions of Zandana's

Prince so far more modest, their city was not destroyed and continued to develop as the center of power during the island's rise to prominence.

By this visit I saw that the taboo on boatbuilding had largely broken down, except on the two or three islands with the most primitive of Zandana's natives, who continued to fish only in the rivers and lakes in their tiny coracles. As the boats grew in size, this allowed for some simple trading between the more advanced islands, yet soon enough came the conflicts, as half a dozen of them constantly maneuvered for dominance. Once a wise ruler on the southern island made the decision to withdraw from the competitive fray and adopt a purely defensive position, the culture started blossoming.

The ideal topography of the island continent enabled it to be self-sufficient, its moderate climate allowed for long and bountiful growing seasons, and the general docility of the natives permitted a steady, if slow, rate of technological progress. While people living on the other islands fought among themselves, those making the southern continent their home began establishing social relationships based on values other than power. This did not include the leadership or the ruling families, who had struggled among themselves for ultimate power for centuries: dictators followed tyrants followed emperors, followed kings, with every transition bringing with it a certain amount of danger and chaos.

These periods of tension often had the unexpected consequence of producing a brief flowering in the arts, especially the theater. Because the indigenous population was essentially peace-loving by nature, humor was becoming the primary way for them to express whatever opposition they felt toward their rulers.

Language had always been a challenge on Zandana. The Prince and his staff's arrival had spread a standard language, together with the skills of reading and writing, throughout all eleven continents. But, with the coming of the rebellion, and the exile of the few staff who remained loyal to MA to another island on the other side of their world, the unified language soon dissolved on the other continents when the Prince and his midwayers retreated back to their island kingdom. What little trading there was between the islands, which had just started to occur at the time of the uprising, soon ceased, and with MA's recall of their loyalist staff, all the islands soon

reverted back to more primitive ways.

As Zandana's Prince aligned himself and his planet with Lucifer's cause, he also believed in accelerating the natural evolutionary processes that MA's planetary administrators had so adamantly resisted. We all did. That was one of the chief unifying factors among the thirty-seven Princes who seceded from MA's grip. And it certainly convinced me! Progress in all the worlds in the System had been painfully slow before the rebellion, and there seemed no good reason for that.

I know that we who aligned ourselves with Lucifer were all subsequently accused of pride—of thinking we knew better than MA's standard practices, of being duped by a false doctrine. We were generally dismissed and snubbed by Lucifer's replacement, Lanaforge and his new central government, but I still insist that we were the ones actually working the surface of the planet. They didn't know, or didn't take seriously enough, the constant buildup of frustrations we were facing on Earth, as it must have been on Zandana as well.

Caligastia used to maintain that he'd constantly reported the exasperating state of affairs on Earth in the centuries prior to the rebellion but was getting no response whatsoever. MA was ignoring him, or her bureaucrats had simply lost his reports behind a filing cabinet, as he used to say with a sarcastic tone. There had been no love lost between Caligastia and MA for some time before everything collapsed at the time of the rebellion. Which, of course, made him all the more supportive of Lucifer's proclamations.

Zandana's Prince was of the same Order of Sonship as Caligastia and had undergone the same selection process, being chosen out of many tens of thousands of volunteers for their posts. They had both undergone the same rigorous training programs and simulations as all the other active Planetary Princes. Yet there were surprising personality differences between the two, as much as anything brought about by having to deal with the contrasting quality of the indigenous natives on the two planets.

I think it went deeper than that. Looking back I feel there was always something slightly odd, slightly undeveloped, about Caligastia, but then again I might well be resorting to the wisdom of hindsight. No one, least of all me, ever commented on it at the time.

I believe I have already mentioned our surprise that Caligastia was among those picked—he had seemed a most unusual choice at the time. He was known to be extremely self-confident and was often the one to challenge the Melchizedek Brothers in the premission seminars. He was popular among the other Princes and generally respected for his boldness, even if I overheard a few of his colleagues speaking somewhat skeptically about him behind his back. They thought his "arrogance," as they expressed it, covered up a much deeper insecurity, although it's hard to know what that might have been, or that such an exquisite being would harbor such "deep insecurities."

However, I was left with a curious thought: given MA's reputation for efficiency, how was it that all the main contenders—Lucifer, Satan, Caligastia, and his assistant Daligastia—were described in the records as being brilliant and wise administrators, but more important, as being exceptionally individualistic? Even before the mission, back on MA's System Headquarters Planet, this was being commented on by some of the other Princes who had not yet been assigned a planet. And, although I wouldn't have been able to conceive of a rebellion at the time, it was in retrospect the first sign I missed that Earth was being prepared for something out of the ordinary.

Like the rest of us, I was a player. I was fully involved in the cosmic drama I found myself in the middle of and threw myself into it wholeheartedly. Doing this was the only way I was going to learn—I knew that.

Only now, as I weave all the many disparate threads together, am I able to appreciate the awful inevitability of Lucifer's rebellion and its subsequent impact on the seceding thirty-seven worlds.

* * *

Although nothing quite as dramatic as Mein Host's unexpected plunge into the pool happened to any of the others in the community, each one of them, in their own way, was letting go of their worldly concerns and starting to open up to the more subtle realms.

It gave those of us observing from the wings pleasure to see that the community was now meditating together, sometimes two or three times a day. Meditation was starting to replace the E-meter sessions that had been so effective in clearing individuals' emotional and psychic blockages back in

London. These sessions were continuing in Nassau in a far more limited way—and only for a favored few. Although they all believed they'd left the devices in England, it turned out that Mary Ann and Robert had brought one along, and it was only they who used it.

A skeptic might wonder if this was due to no cash changing hands at this point, individual money having been relinquished in London, yet I don't believe this is altogether true. They had set out on a spiritual adventure together—each of them had thrown everything they had into the mix, so money was no longer the important medium of exchange. Other, more fascinating, interchanges were in the air.

The bonding that was occurring between the individuals in the community, amplified by their commitment to giving up their previous lives and then intensified by isolation and their focus on inner work—all this was coalescing to produce a remarkably open group mind. Individual spiritual growth, unless it was vastly accelerated by personal spiritual experience as in Mein Host's case, was becoming of less importance than how psychically close the community was growing.

As the group became more adept at quieting their minds and listening, they entered a new phase in the process. It followed quite naturally for them to agree on a question beforehand and then to pose it to the "Beings," as they were now calling the voices they were hearing while meditating. Mary Ann would then "call everyone back in" and ask each of them to say what they received from the Beings—what they "got."

The questions didn't appear to be preplanned but tended to emerge spontaneously during the interminable discussions that continued every evening, sometimes late into the tropical night. Mary Ann was invariably the center of attention in these meetings, with Robert playing an increasingly diminished role as the emphasis slipped from the rational/philosophical into Mary Ann's realm of the psychic/mystical. In this way their meditations slowly turned into something much closer to creative visualization.

This process moved slowly at the start, with various people rather timidly saying what they heard or saw. Often the answers were too specifically personal, or irrelevant for some other reason. Mary Ann was the final arbiter on whether someone's response was appropriate to the matter at hand. Yet gradually, over the weeks, the group's confidence in the Beings grew with

the coherence of the answers they were receiving; the way different people received information that would weave together to create a larger, or deeper, sweep of understanding.

I mentioned earlier how Mary Ann would quickly decide on the relevance of other people's input, validating some, using their answers to thread together her tapestry, just as she would reject, often with devastating scorn or sarcasm, the contributions of others. The inevitable result of this was a two-tiered system in which those favored by Mary Ann found themselves being treated with special consideration, drawn in close to her, sitting at her feet in their gatherings, being included in the smaller meetings with those already within her inner circle, and sometimes even allowed the privilege of spending time alone with her.

Mary Ann's inner circle of half a dozen of the original members, established early in the Wigmore Street era, had now swollen to about a dozen, of which only two or three at any one time were treated as favorites.

And what did it mean to be a favorite?

Mein Host clearly believed himself to be in heaven, surrounded by the love of the Goddess—sitting close to her at meetings; to adore her with all the pent-up adoration of the recent convert, to laugh with the wonder of it all, to burst into spontaneous tears of joy at his good fortune. All his life had led to this moment.

He'd found the Goddess—the incarnate Goddess, no less. And he found her for himself.

He felt a whole new world opening up for him.

For the first time I could see some activity in his spiritual body and the fluid manner in which his emotional body was interacting with it.

These were entirely new emotions for the boy—spiritual feelings. Nothing in his previous life had prepared him for this. It was overwhelming. As much as he could barely contain his distaste for the woman only weeks earlier, he was now besotted with her. His love of the Goddess, so present in his Bengali incarnation and so vociferously denied in this lifetime, burst through in overpowering waves of love and veneration directed toward Mary Ann.

Mary Ann, of course, relished every minute of it.

I need to choose my words carefully here, because we are moving into the

more delicate areas of the heart. I am unfamiliar with the feelings involved with human love so I hesitate to use the word *infatuation*, because it suggests a certain superficiality, just as the word *obsessed* in this context implies a sense of mental derangement. I don't believe Mein Host ever idolized Mary Ann and I saw no signs of him worshipping her, nor was he romantically in love with her. And he certainly wasn't sexually drawn to her, rather the opposite. Yet, he was obviously enamored of her.

Here I was able to discern far more about what was happening in and around Mein Host than he could. The waves of love had swept away all residual doubts, and, from what I could observe, he was now completely ensnared in Mary Ann's web. Naturally, falling into her web is not how he would have thought of his "special" relationship with her at the time. Indeed, it seemed to those of us observing as if the events that unfolded over the next few months were being conjured largely to reinforce his conviction that Mary Ann was the Goddess.

Now, as I write and contemplate these events in my young ward's life, I'm bound to admit how twisted have become the paths to righteousness in this fearful world. Tens of thousands of years of Caligastia's influence and all the many consequences of the rebellion, compounded by generations of human violence and catastrophe, have all contributed to making the individual human spiritual quest a most confusing affair. Materialist and mechanistic belief systems have placed such emphasis on physical "proof " that many people now distrust their intuitions, fearing that they are deluding themselves, or, worse, that they'll be accused of self-delusion.

Many religions staunchly adhere to their ancient teachings under the false belief they are all the more authentic for their age. The more recent religions —Mormonism, the Bahá'i faith, Sikhism, the various branches of Islam, as well as the many denominations of Christianity and the assorted sects and cults that have come and gone over the centuries—have all served Caligastia's purposes by fracturing into a thousand different belief systems that diverged from the original mission's simple faith in the Creator.

When Caligastia claimed the title of God of this world for himself soon after the angelic rebellion, he was as good as saying he was setting out to pervert—or attempt to corrupt—any and all prophets and their religions and

that he would have to attempt to turn the reverence and worshipful impulses of human beings toward himself. When you realize that every religion to have emerged over the past 203,000 years—authentic or fraudulent—has arisen on Caligastia's turf, and all of them have had to deal with, or negotiate with, the "God of this World," you can appreciate how clouded a simple belief in God has become.

As early as the community's time in Nassau, I had few illusions about Mary Ann and what her true motives might be. I'd watched as Mein Host's companion angels supported and smoothed the way for his rejoining the community, and it had puzzled me. It seemed that he was being fed straight into the maw of the lioness. I feared that he might never emerge intact. Now, to my surprise (and yes, angels can be surprised), I was seeing him blossoming like a flower in the passion of his love for the Goddess. He was opening up in a way I'd never seen before, and yet, even as I watched, I saw that his devotion was not so much projected onto Mary Ann as directed through her to the Great Goddess, Mother of the Angels.

I was encouraged by this. I then understood something about Mein Host, which was to serve him well as his life progressed. I could see his willingness to throw himself wholeheartedly into whatever experience his angels laid in his path that would allow him to move through the darker times to come. He would never have been able to take this in at the time and certainly would never had attributed the events in his life to angelic guidance, although I heard a faint resonance of this in a conversation he had with Juliette soon after the swimming pool incident.

"I was always a skinny kid," he was saying, "but I liked sports—cricket, field hockey, shooting, basketball, but especially soccer. I used to play on the right wing, so I had to be fast. Which meant I was always being tackled by large and hefty fullbacks. What I learned from painful experience was to go into any tackle at full bore."

"That had to take courage," Juliette said, only half listening.

"No, it wasn't that exactly." After a thoughtful pause, he continued. "It wasn't about being brave. It's just the way it turned out. More like a discovery. The harder I'd go into a tackle—didn't matter how large and fierce the other guy was—the less likely I was getting hurt . . ."

"Almost like you were being looked after?"

My ward looked up sharply at that.

“I never quite thought of it like that. Back when I was experimenting with entheogens, yes, I did feel somehow protected. This was different. It had more to do with focusing my intention, for going all out to get that ball through the opposition. If I held nothing back, it was as though everything slowed down. Like slow motion. I could see exactly who was where, whose feet were doing what, and I could often slip right through. Here’s the point, though: whenever I did collide with the guy, which was pretty often, if I was going hell-bent, I never got hurt—never!”

“And you noticed that?” said Juliette, perhaps a bit sardonically, shifting her chair out of the sun.

“Well, yes. I suppose it is a bit obvious. Of course, it’s silly to do anything half-cocked. But this seemed to be an extension of that. Something else was going on.”

No response from Juliette this time. She may have been asleep.

“Closest I can describe it,” he said, breaking the long silence, “it’s something like that fast tackle in soccer. Two, sometimes more, people are converging rapidly on the same ten-inch round leather ball—itself moving fast and unpredictably on the end of somebody’s boot. Bodies are hurling themselves together, arms and legs are thrashing in the air, and yet when the moment comes and everything goes into slow motion, I can see the way through. Like the path of least resistance. Or finding my limbs in exactly the right position, and at just the right moment in time, to slide through untouched with the ball.”

Another contemplative silence. Juliette wriggled her long tanned legs to show that she was awake and listening.

I knew they were fond of each other, and although both were architects, it was Juliette’s exotic South African background and her tall, slim, body that had drawn them together for one night of unrewarding lovemaking back in London. She was a sensitive, if somewhat austere, woman with a placid and undemanding nature who had appreciated Mein Host’s affections in London without placing any demands or expectations on him. It seemed to me that both of them were quite content to have gotten the sex out of the way so they could settle into a warm friendship.

Mein Host broke the silence.

“Of course, those perfect situations didn’t happen too often. But I still remember the sensation. It was so pure and beautiful, like there was only one perfect series of moves that would take me through the tackle unscathed with the ball under my control.” He paused before continuing: “And I can only find that one series of moves if I’m going flat-out . . .”

Juliette was looking at him now, shading her bright blue eyes from the sun with a hand. Something was interesting her.

“Could just be the brain making very fast calculations.” Juliette’s brow was starting to wrinkle. “Like in tennis or cricket. Say you’re running toward a ball, your brain has to be making all sorts of rapid calculations to get you accurately under the ball to catch it. ’Course it gets increasingly complex with more people . . .”

“That might be an aspect of it,” he cut in impatiently, “but it still doesn’t account for those moments when everything turns perfect . . . when everything slows down.” He smiled at Juliette, slowing himself down. “It’s a bit like meditating, isn’t it? When you reach the point at which personal concerns just drop away and it’s all smooth potential.”

Whether or not Juliette understood what he was talking about, the dinner gong was sounding and figures were moving quietly across the courtyard toward the tables on which the evening meal was placed. Holding out his hand, he helped Juliette to her feet and they strolled over to join the others for dinner.

What this allowed me, however, was a glimpse into Mein Host’s progress with his meditations. In spite of Juliette’s pragmatic observation about the brain—something he might have said himself only a few months before—I could see that he was assimilating the paranormal experiences of his time in Nassau into his thinking.

Because part of my arrangement with Mein Host is to write my story and my observations about his life as I perceived them, I can say confidently that what happened one week later occurred more for his sake than he was inclined to believe at the time. He called it a lucid dream when recording it in his journal, and indeed it did have a degree of clarity unlike any normal dream state. He remembers it clearly to this day.

The encounter happened during another siesta one afternoon as he was resting alone on a mattress in one of the large upstairs rooms of Princess House. He described it afterward to Juliette more as a joke, because it did have a silly aspect, but I knew it was more serious than that.

“I was just lying there. I thought I was asleep, but I was also kind of awake, too. You know what it’s like? When you wake up and yet you’re still dreaming, except it’s a different sort of dream.”

“Yeah, they’re called lucid dreams,” Juliette said knowingly. “I can fly in them sometimes . . .”

“Right. Me, too. But this was different—it really was like being awake, because there I was, lying on the same mattress in the same room. I could see the long white drapes billowing in the wind. Then I caught a movement in the corner of my right eye and turned my head slightly to see two tall beings proceeding across the room . . .

“No, they weren’t coming toward me, they were moving parallel to my mattress—although I don’t know if they were walking or floating—as if they were using the room to get somewhere. They looked really tall to me, but I was lying down at the time. They were obviously intelligent—I could see that in their eyes. They had two arms and legs and appeared to be dressed in some form of belted tunic, but it was their heads that grabbed my attention. They looked more canine than human, with shortened snouts and a light-brown fur on their faces, together with a pair of long, stiff ears protruding up above the top of their heads.

“When they saw that I’d noticed them, they stopped and turned toward me, and you’ll never guess what one of them said. And this is what was so ridiculous. They said, or at least one of them did—and it must have been telepathic—he said, ‘Take me to your leader.’ Just like that. ‘Take me to your leader.’”

Juliette was laughing along with him now.

“Here’s the odd thing, though. They seemed quite real to me. And when they asked me to take them to my leader, they looked absolutely serious. Here were these strange, otherworldly creatures talking to me! And their first words were this dreadful cliché!”

“You’d have thought they’d have come up with something better than

that!” Juliette said again through her giggles. “So what did you do?”

“Well, I took them to my leader, of course!”

“Mary Ann?”

“And they went down on one knee before her.”

“Both of them?”

“Somehow I could see them—I can’t remember how. Perhaps I left my body when I was showing them where to go to find Mary Ann. But I have a clear memory of them going across the courtyard and floating up the stairs and into Mary Ann’s room, then bowing their heads and kneeling before her. It was the weirdest thing . . .”

They lapsed into silence, both thinking about the event. Was it simply a dream? If a dream is lucid, does that make it more real? Was it a metaphor? A fantasy? A joke? An hallucination? Did it mean something?

“What is curious, Juliette, is the timing. However real it was doesn’t really matter. Just that if this happened at any other point in my life I wouldn’t have had a leader to take them to! Even a couple of months ago I wouldn’t have thought of Mary Ann as being my leader. Yet it felt perfectly natural. I didn’t hesitate.”

“Perhaps that’s what it was really about,” Juliette said thoughtfully. “Perhaps it was just to show you that you’d surrendered to Mary Ann. You’ve finally let your guard down. In fact, I’ll bet you’ve never accepted that sort of leadership before. You’re such a bloody rebel.”

“I was fighting her for the past two years. I still find it hard to believe this has happened . . .” Mein Host’s voice was breaking, and I could see tears starting to roll down his face.

“You’ve changed. You are a different person,” Juliette reached over to wipe the tears away and gently stroked his face. “You’re finding out who you are at last.”

⁂

The millennia passed. Ice ages came and went as the human species was being scattered this way and that by climatic conditions, populations expanding and contracting as wars, famines, and the natural disasters to which humankind is subject raged on.

Whenever I visited Earth over the centuries, it seemed to me that nothing much was happening. Or, rather, the same thing was happening over and over again. Granted, the progress we were making before the rebellion was tediously slow, but at least we were inching forward. Now it looked as if everything was going around in circles. Compared to life on Zandana, whose steady development was starting to become evident in the growing sophistication of its political systems, Earth was a backwater: one of the more unfortunate examples of the consequences of an angelic rebellion.

Perhaps one event drawn from that long, dark era will serve to illustrate this tiresome pattern, which I'm sure will be all too recognizable to any student of history.

This particular tragedy started, as so many have, in the surge of optimism that sweeps periodically through large groups of people. The wave generally begins by being focused on one individual, or sometimes on a small group who have a concept that unifies people. In most cases this impulse tends to be reactive and manifests as a revolution against the status quo of the moment; rarely do these events draw from the deeper currents of goodness and creativity that run through human nature.

In this case Vanu became the central figure. Vanu, you'll remember, was the staff member who remained loyal to MA and who elected to stay on the planet long after his thirty-nine colleagues had been lifted off. We last encountered him setting up camp in the foothills on the Indian border with the intention of spreading south and east to avoid Caligastia's primary sphere of influence in the Middle East.

Over the subsequent centuries, the two groups started a slow process of internal consolidation, each in its own manner. Caligastia's dominion spread west, including much of Africa and then north into Europe and Russia when the ice permitted. Because he had the vast majority of the midwayers under his sway, he made use of them as a shepherd might work his sheep. Using tribal sorcerers, magicians, and priests as his mouthpieces, he evoked intense emotions in their followers, terrifying some, inspiring others, while sending still others into paroxysms of ecstatic self-mutilation. By manipulating human religious emotions on the one hand, and encouraging technological innovation on the other, he promoted a state of constant tension between the various tribes and groups under his dominion.

Within 350 years, a single autocratic empire emerged out of all the fighting in the Prince's domain. Caligastia and his rebel midwayers were then finally free to accelerate the rate of their technological development, unimpeded by any moral constraints contradicting their own self-interest.

Gold had been found on the surface of the great Nubian Desert by the early tribes, who had used the glittering metal for the crudest of personal ornamentation. The natives knew nothing about gold's low melting point and simply pressed the tiny pieces of the metal they'd picked up into damp clay. All that changed, however, when the more advanced tribes swept down from the north, bringing their metallurgical skills along with the wizardry of their midwayer-inspired sorcerers.

As Caligastia's empire expanded down through Egypt, south to Somalia and Ethiopia, and on along the eastersn coast of Africa, some of his followers moved inland to settle around the Great Lakes. Shallow mines close to the southernmost lake, and then farther south down the Rift Valley, were producing gold, tin, and silver in far larger quantities than previously available. As this fairly loose-knit empire broadened its influence, the simple barter of goods became more and more impractical as the distances increased.

Units of currency—money, that is—not seen since the times of the city, reappeared, but with two major differences. Back in the days of the city, the units of currency were carefully crafted clay tablets of different value, which were issued interest-free by the central committee for labor and materials. Because there was no interest incurred on the initial issuance of the money, the accumulation of wealth on money lent at interest never became an issue. If people needed money to exchange for goods, they simply applied to the central committee, demonstrated what they needed it for, and were freely given the sum required. There was no need to cheat or steal, as money was readily available for all needs.

Caligastia, however, made sure the currency in his empire was cast from the precious metals under his control and issued not by a central agency but by the various ambitious and acquisitive individuals who invariably come to the fore in any human community. In this way he satisfied some essential requirements of his management style: by maintaining ultimate control of his kings and satraps through the skillful distribution of favors in the form of gold, he was assured of intense competition, as greed and corruption were

bound to surface among the various puppet kingdoms. By encouraging interest on loans, he created a wealthy subclass of people who might be fairly called the original “bankers.” And perhaps most significantly for the modern mind, he forced the flow of money into predictable cycles of boom and bust, generating enormous wealth for a ruling elite while forcing the general population to remain in servitude, or slavery.

Throughout this period a number of significant events occurred that established the way human beings conduct their social, economic, and political lives and that remain recognizable to this day. The unholy alliance of warrior-kings, the sorcery of priests, the mining and maintenance of precious metals and stones, and the institution of slavery—all these and more coalesced to form a system of social control that has persisted, in one form or another, in almost every human culture throughout history.

These social and economic arrangements are sometimes cruel and always self-serving, enabling the elite to grow richer and more powerful over the many generations. Most often, the cabals are hidden, camouflaged beneath the busyness of everyday life. Yet these elements have become so intimately intertwined, and so deeply embedded in human affairs, that it would be naive to imagine history without such a persistent conspiracy.

The final act of this endless global drama is found today in the complicity between the military-industrial complex, the religious-educational institutions, and the corporate-banking-governmental interests. The various scandals that have emerged in recent times—the cynical military cost-overruns, the dishonesty and greed of the banking industry, the accumulation of wealth through political exploitation, police brutality, child sexual molestation by priests and educators—all these scandals have helped expose the extent to which the modern world has remained trapped in the web Prince Caligastia spun so many millennia ago.

Because this unfortunate situation is also an incipient possibility in any world at this level of density, it shouldn’t be altogether surprising that it has formed such a tenacious matrix around which all dominant cultures on this planet have historically assembled themselves. The impact of the angelic rebellion, and the choices instigated by Caligastia and the rebels, made it almost inevitable that the ideals of the original mission would fracture with the growing ambitions of individual midwayers operating with a free hand.

Of course, certain groups of humans were always going to be particularly susceptible to Caligastia's intrigues. These people would inevitably become embroiled in one of the rebel midwayers' occult machinations, or, because they were greedy and ambitious enough in their own right, they would manipulate and get the better of their fellows.

In those early days, like now, there was a wide disparity in the level and quality of the consciousness of the humans on the planet. This is echoed dimly, and not altogether accurately, in the startling gap you observe for yourselves between the rich and poor in virtually all contemporary human societies. And just as each individual human being can be said to be ascending or descending a ladder between the extremes of cosmic consciousness at one end, and sleep and death at the other, so it is for groups, nations, and, ultimately, entire worlds.

Human consciousness, in the individuated form you experience it, was still in its infancy at those early stages. It was more collective than individuated and somewhat similar to a large crowd at a sporting event. While the crowd comprises individuals, during the game itself many identical thoughts and feelings will sweep through the spectators, rendering them effectively of one mind. After the game they will return to the mental isolation of their individuated consciousnesses.

Not so, for humans of those distant ages. They tended to be lodged more fully in the collective consciousness. Clearly their sense of the collective was of a far smaller and more manageable unit than for whatever passes as the collective in your global culture. The herding instinct has never been far from the surface in your species, and your distant forebears were even more tractable in following the most powerful influence because their psychic boundaries were far less defined.

Humans have always been extremely susceptible to suggestion in this state of psychic openness, as the Nazi party's Nuremberg rallies so forcefully demonstrated. And these were modern, cultured, and sophisticated twentieth-century Germans! Early humans, fearful and unsure of themselves in an uncertain and hostile world, were all the more vulnerable to the demands of their gods, their midwayer overseers, and the wizard behind the curtain, the self-appointed divine leader, Prince Caligastia.

Vanu, on the other hand, as you might imagine, was taking a different approach with the growing numbers who were following his teachings. When the staff was back in the city before the uprising, it was the spiritual aspect of the staff ’s mission to bring the knowledge of God the Father to this world. Vanu continued this tradition as he moved around, setting up small settlements throughout the East. By steadfastly refusing to employ Caligastia’s manipulative tactics, by ensuring that his midwayers resisted the temptation to interfere with human beings for their own purposes, by insisting that no midwayer pose as a god or a goddess, and by being a true and faithful friend and a fine leader, Vanu slowly built a closely knit but far more spiritually unified realm than Caligastia’s eternally fractious Northwestern Empire.

As Vanu’s far-flung settlements started trading with each other, often using what was to become known as the “Silk Road” a thousand centuries later, their worship of the one God, albeit in slightly different forms, tended to bind them together. It was fortuitous, too, that the indigenous races in the Eastern regions were found to have a natural affinity to the collective mind. This allowed Vanu to mold a remarkably harmonious civilization, stretching from the Iranian border, throughout much of India, on to China, and up into Mongolia, dependent (as always) on the movement of the ice.

The fandors by this time had formed a deep bond of trust and friendship with Vanu and with Amadon, whom the birds appeared to revere almost as much as they adored Onya. In fact, it was the young woman’s sad fate that discouraged Amadon and the others from riding on a fandor’s back, as it also introduced a certain degree of reasonable caution around the enormous birds. Many centuries would pass before either species regained their confidence enough to fly together again.

Nevertheless, the few fandors who had chosen to accompany Vanu’s exile proved invaluable as his territories expanded. They were not only able to fly ahead on scouting missions, but unlike the midwayer scouts, they were also able to carry physical objects between the far-flung settlements.

At this time I never saw a single fandor operating within Caligastia’s domain. They continued to be a valued asset to Vanu’s ultimate expansion into Lemuria, before the last of the fandors had served her purpose and that noble species disappeared back into the lifestream.

Vanu attempted to continue much of what had been taught back in Dalamatia, but it became a far slower and more frustrating affair now that they had to approach the tribes directly, as they came across them in their travels. Gone was the time when the staff could telepathically call the best and brightest into the city for an advanced education before sending them back to their tribes. This had always proved to be the best and most effective way of gradually raising both the standard of living and the level of consciousness of the natives. Now progress became even more gradual and far more dangerous.

Yet, as Vanu lived on over tens of thousands of years, it was inevitable that myths and legends would grow up around him. Although he was careful to try to avoid visiting the same settlements more than once within the lifetime of its oldest inhabitant, and did his best to attempt to prevent a personality cult from developing around him, given the naturally worshipful nature of humans, that was bound to happen.

In some ways this helped his cause over the first few millennia, but I assume he must have realized that his continuing presence would ultimately become a distraction from his fundamental teaching about the Unseen God. As a consequence, Vanu withdrew to a large teaching monastery he had established in the foothills of the Himalayas. Regardless, the myth of a man who lived forever kept circulating through the centuries, to plant the concept of personal immortality firmly within the prevalent belief systems. It also launched the quest for eternal life, which has so preoccupied the Eastern imagination.

Both Vanu and Caligastia used certain of their midwayers as espionage agents to spy on one another’s progress. I was able to observe them lurking around in subspace without their being aware of my presence, yet I don’t believe much of interest emerged for all their sly poking around. The two constituencies and the way they were organized were so wildly different that there was little they could offer one another—or usefully steal from the other. All that would come later.

One of the most basic differences, and one that would end up influencing humanity’s relationship with money and commerce to the present day, was how the two groups handled their finances. Vanu had emulated the city’s

approach by having his central authority issue small clay tablets of different denominations that could then be used in transactions between the many far-flung tribes in his domain.

Whether or not the ready availability of gold influenced Caligastia's decision, he implemented an entirely different system. Because his overall strategy appears to have been one of divide and conquer, it should be no surprise that he encouraged all the kings and warlords under his control to mint their own coinage, and to do it using nothing but gold. They would have to dig up that gold, if they were fortunate to have the metal within their regions, or acquire it through trading or theft if they didn't. But they could never be allowed to forget that it was Caligastia's gold.

Unlike many a human tyrant, Caligastia had no interest in procuring a fortune for himself, because he had no material presence: on the contrary, his obsession appeared to be more focused on power**,** control, and manipulation for his own amusement. At least that's how it had turned out by this point—whether he ever started off with more altruistic motives is clearly arguable. I believe his motive for setting up this monetary arrangement could only have been to further his control over the levers of power. Here's how I observed his scheme working itself out within Caligastia's vast territories.

Gold had started to be mined once the small amount of the metal that had been washed to the surface in the Nubian Desert had all been collected. Predictably, the three warlords in whose regions gold was starting to be mined soon grew immensely wealthy as gold replaced barter as legal tender. They accumulated this wealth because they'd mined the gold at minimal cost to themselves and then exchanged it for goods of considerable intrinsic value.

A number of consequences sprang directly from Caligastia's decision to link the concept of money with gold, and I find it hard to believe that the Prince could not have anticipated these consequences. As I've come to believe, it was yet another of his acts of deliberate provocation, designed to engender conflict and to promote greed and avarice—because that is precisely what happened, and I might add, continues to happen.

The first, and perhaps most poisonous, result was the creation of a subclass of people who actually handled the gold on a day-to-day basis. As I've previously suggested, you can think of them as the early bullion brokers and bankers. These bankers were invariably drawn from the ruling elites and were

carefully primed for their functions by Caligastia in the dreamworld.

Mining gold was, and still is, a wretchedly hard and filthy business requiring enormous numbers of people in backbreaking work. Both the tunneling and the separation of gold from the rock matrix was exhausting and dangerous labor—a job for slaves.

Ever since humans first gathered in tribes and fought each other, slaves had always been taken by the victors in war. Although doubtless unpleasant for the individual slaves when they were captured and put to work, there were never very many of them in any given kingdom. In fact, over the centuries, with a the inevitable sexual attraction between men and women, slaves often served to broaden the gene pool of the tribe.

This all changed when gold mining started with a vengeance in southern Egypt.

No longer was the metal being used simply for decorative purposes, but, with Caligastia's prodding to use gold as a unit of currency, suddenly the metal itself had value. And when an arbitrary value is placed on something intrinsically valueless, it opens up a Pandora's box of potential wickedness.

Follow me here: it's probably elementary economics, and yet I have the sense from observing people that it may be as carefully masked from general understanding now as it was then.

Bartering goods has a way of establishing value. One sheep might have the value of ten chickens, a cow might be exchanged for two sheep. In that case, twenty chickens would be regarded as a fair exchange for one cow. On the whole it's a fair system, which doesn't encourage avarice or greed, but it is of necessity very local. Thus, there's a need for a medium of exchange in which everyone agrees on value. A clay medallion of any denomination has no inherent value beyond what it can be exchanged for in goods of the same value. Introduce gold into the mix as the coinage, give it an arbitrary value, and another layer of financial skullduggery opens up. Gold could now be traded as if it had an inherent value, a value that could be raised or lowered by manipulating demand and scarcity.

And this is where the bankers came into the picture.

These favored individuals financed and ran the mines. They used their considerable influence to foment wars for the primary purpose of collecting

slaves on a massive scale to work and die in the mines. Because of their ability to raise or lower the value of the currency, they became immensely wealthy. A few of the wiser warlords in the mining regions sought to claim the gold for themselves, but they were soon outwitted by bankers in other regions who conspired to force the value of gold down to a point at which it was virtually worthless.

This small group of bankers were now poised to lend gold at interest, and to be repaid in gold, thus adding to their treasuries. All this lending with interest prompted a need for ever more gold, which required more and more slaves to mine it, which in turn made almost constant warfare a necessity.

The metal was now being found and mined in deposits that were being discovered the farther they ventured up the Nile's many tributaries. Soon the mines were operating twenty-four hours a day, slaves were dying by the thousands, and the growing gap between rich and poor established a pattern that has profoundly distorted all subsequent cultures.

There was no trading between Caligastia and Vanu's territories for many centuries—just the opposite. Although they engaged in no out-andout warfare, skirmishes frequently broke out where the two territories bordered each other around the western coast of the Caspian Sea.

The deep hatred Caligastia held for the loyalist Vanu had started back in the city at the point at which the Prince believed he'd managed to coopt his entire staff to follow him into rebellion. Vanu had stood up to him, effectively blocking his plans for a clean sweep, and he had now built up a considerable following deeply opposed to the Caligastia regime.

However, because it is human nature to envy what others have, it was inevitable that trade would start at some point between these two very different systems. People tend to trade or fight, if they're not fighting about trading.

14

Advances in Group Telepathy

Listening to Beings, Origins of Metallurgy, Guided to Mexico, Vanu's Devotion, and Caligastia's Failed Invasion

Juliette's comment was true. Mein Host had changed—radically.

It seemed to me that his emotional body was rapidly transforming. The rigidity with which he'd been holding on to his negative reactions to Mary Ann, for example, had all but completely dissolved. His true feelings, which lay under a maelstrom of emotions—as deep ocean currents flow under choppy, windswept waves—could finally move up into his spiritual body. The lad was filled with the Spirit. He was astonished. He'd never felt like this before, despite all his previous entheogenic adventures.

He loved Mary Ann with a purity he'd never imagined possible. Perhaps more dangerously, his *chi*—or life energy—had by now almost entirely shifted into his higher chakras. He felt that he'd met the Goddess—here, alive, and in this world. His spiritual body was filled with love. Yet, to his surprise, it was love without a hint of eroticism. Enfolded in Mary Ann's arms, he felt supremely safe. He was home. His life, he would tell his Goddess, had led irrevocably to this very point in time.

He'd found what he didn't even know he was looking for.

The community's time in Nassau was drawing to an end. Their search for an island in the Caribbean that they could buy, and on which they planned to start life anew from scratch, was proving fruitless. They'd been sending out pairs to view some of the potential sites for months, only to find that the few islands available for purchase were either exorbitantly expensive or lacked any source of water.

Living in the semi-tropics was such a novel and enjoyable experience for

the young men and women of the community, many of whom had never left their cold, wet, island before, that they seemed quite happy to have been in Nassau while they waited for an island to manifest. The group had grown closer for being cut off from their lives in England and their previous distractions. Working with the “Beings,” as they continued to call the voices they heard answering their questions in their meditations, consumed more and more of their time.

However, over the months the nonappearance of the eagerly anticipated island was starting to become discouraging, and I could sense a certain defensive indolence in the air during their long, evening meetings. The group continued to meditate together, to ask their questions of the Beings, and to studiously write the answers in their journals. Yet, on a level of which they were barely aware, the enthusiasm that had carried them out of their quotidian lives back in England was fast fading for a few in the group.

Mein Host, now one of Mary Ann’s favorites and enclosed in a bubble of love, was wholly oblivious to the changing mood in the community.

However, the ever-vigilant Mary Ann was not.

And here I was able for the first time to recognize one of Mary Ann’s key tools in her manipulative toolbox. I might have been able to spot it before, when the community first left England, but in giving her the benefit of doubt, I overlooked what was now obvious to me. As the “Great Island Search” was drawing to a close (there was nowhere left to search) and before any serious disillusionment could set in, Mary Ann subtly redirected everyone’s attention.

It was like watching a magician or a ventriloquist, even from my elevated viewpoint. I had to admit that she was brilliant. It was as if suddenly, in one evening, everyone knew it was time to leave the Bahamas. And yet it was impossible to trace the initial impulse back to her. She may have even appeared surprised when the decision to leave Nassau seemed to emerge naturally in the group discussion that evening.

Mein Host, now an intimate confidant of the Goddess, was aware of how Mary Ann felt about moving on and pitched in with enthusiasm, as did a number of her other favorites. From back in the early days in London, Mary Ann had paid particular attention to cultivating the young women in the group. There were perhaps half a dozen of them whom Mary Ann had firmly

under her wing and who would later become the senior matriarchs in what was rapidly developing into a matriarchal cult.

Robert still played his part, writing and vaguely philosophizing in the endless evening meetings, but it was Mary Ann who was the Queen of the Night. It was her invisible hand that controlled the ebb and flow of the gatherings, her brilliant insights that opened hidden doors, as it was the clarity of her intuition that saw so deeply into the psyche of each individual present.

A matriarchal cult was not quite the Mystery School Mein Host had convinced himself he was joining, but having found the Goddess and thrown himself at her knees, he wished nothing more than to love, serve, and please Mary Ann.

Although I may have had a more realistic understanding of Mary Ann's nature and motives than my young ward, I had no way of intervening or warning him about what I knew. Even if I had been able to alert Mein Host, it was clear to me that his companion angels, who had facilitated his rejoining the community in the first place, remained supportive of his presence in the group. Once again, I can only believe that they knew better than I did what the young man needed in order to grow in spirit.

The next day the community was buzzing with possibilities. Nassau was all very well—it had been good to them. Yet because the islands were still in British hands—the Bahamas didn't become fully independent until 1973—there was a stultifying sense of English colonial middle-class values pervading the small town.

"Clear away the sun, the sea, and a few palm trees," I heard said more than once, "and you could be in Budleigh Salterton!" to knowing laughs all around. It was in small English seaside towns like Budleigh that retirees settled, returned prematurely (in their view) from colonial service in the far-flung British Empire. These were upright and loyal servants of the crown, men and women who had watched, within the course of their own lifetimes, the dissolution of an empire they'd served so faithfully. In compensation, these relics of a bygone age insisted on projecting their autocratic standards onto a world that was changing beneath their feet.

These were the very standards the Process had rejected, the very values that had gotten the world into the mess it was in. No, indeed, colonial Nassau

was not the place where they were dreaming of ending up.

At the meeting that evening, the subject came up as to where they should go. While they knew they were going to leave the Bahamas, they had yet to settle on what felt like the right place to put down roots. The various possibilities had been hanging in the air all day: Would it be America? Peru? Belize? Venezuela? Mexico? Certainly not back to England—that was never even mentioned. They were all off on a grand new adventure. They were finally about to step into truly unknown territory.

In making a decision as important as where to go on leaving Nassau, they naturally wanted to consult the Beings. With Mary Ann leading the meditation, everyone, except one person—Vanessa, a dark-haired, self-concerned young beauty—appeared to "hear" the same answer.

"Go to Mexico."

"Mexico. It'll be Mexico."

"You'll find what you are looking for in Mexico."

"First, fly to Mexico City."

So it went, around the circle—some thirty young men and women, all in agreement. All but Vanessa, who was convinced that she'd heard "Venezuela." She put up a spirited defense of her idiosyncratic choice, even threatening to go to Caracas on her own if it came down to it, before bending reluctantly to the enthusiasm of the group.

* * *

Both Caligastia's Northwestern Empire and Vanu's Eastern territories were relatively self-sufficient in all staple products, so the minimal amount of trading that was taking place invariably involved luxuries.

The distances were so vast that the items traded tended to be small and portable—pink pearls from one of Vanu's fishing settlements on the coast of the South China Sea; pigeon's-blood rubies from the Mogok Valley in Burma; saffron, a spice derived from a crocus native to southwest Asia, which became an acquired taste in the highest courts of Egypt; iridescent abalone shells, found on beaches along the eastern coast of the African continent, which made their way to the skilled artisans of northern India.

The treks were long and dangerous, and the weather always unpredictable,

with the trading paths snaking along dry riverbeds, through deep, sun-starved gorges, and over mountain passes where inexperienced travelers regularly died from the freezing conditions and the prolonged lack of oxygen.

All this changed, however, when silver was found in sufficient quantities in China. Vanu happened to be visiting the settlement at the time so he saw for himself. Not as soft as gold, silver, in the small pieces occasionally found in dry riverbeds, had been used decoratively for many generations by the local tribes. But this new find was different.

When one of the shallow mines revealed massive deposits of silver, copper, and lead, Vanu must have considered it important enough to break his own rules—although I never overheard anyone in his entourage ever commenting on this apparent hypocrisy. Nevertheless, it was the rule sometimes termed the “Prime Directive” by later generations of spacefarers, and held every bit as sacrosanct. To intervene in any way with another culture, so the rule directed, was to deprive that culture of the necessary challenges required for its ultimate growth. As can be imagined, this required extraordinary self-discipline on the part of Vanu, as it had on the part of all the Prince’s staff back before the uprising. And, as we know, it was one of Caligastia’s main complaints in his demand to accelerate the pace of technological progress.

I’m reporting this event in some detail, because I believe it illustrates one of the inherent dilemmas facing any individual of a more advanced culture as she attempts to interact with a less developed one.

In most of Vanu’s settlements there were a few individuals bold enough to work with fire and metals. This was largely dependent on what ores were found in the vicinity of that particular settlement and the methods of extraction were extremely crude. With the sudden availability of large quantities of silver, and in spite of all his injunctions regarding the introduction of any artificial acceleration of technology, Vanu passed along some of the closely held secrets of metallurgy. Nothing too advanced, mind you, we can be thankful for that. But overnight, or so it seemed to me, this select group was able to separate the various metals, stripping away the lead in their ovens. In these new ovens I saw Vanu’s hand at work. While a brilliant though obvious solution, granted, I could see that Vanu must have been planning something new.

It hadn’t been easy for me to explore what was happening at the minehead. I only got a quick glimpse before Vanu’s midwayers threw up such a wall of confusion in subspace that I had to retreat before I found myself dragged into the barrage of emotional chaos and lost myself. Yet what I saw in that one brief glance startled me, and I quickly understood why they were so protective of their secret. Even I, who was still thought of as a Caligastia spy, hoped this particular technique for increasing the temperature of their fires did not fall into the hands of the Northwestern Empire with their militaristic ambitions.

You’ll recall the natives of this world had always been unreasonably frightened of fire. Before the uprising, time and again they’d rejected any demonstration of the many uses of steam. This fear had persisted through the millennia, sometimes easing for a while until a forest fire, an erupting volcano, or a sudden crack of thunder terrified the natives all over again. And the staff would be back where they started.

Yet after the rebellion had run its course and Vanu’s group started off on the great trek eastward, perceptible changes were occurring in many of the native groups. There was a greater sense of self-reliance now that they were out from under the administrative surveillance of the Prince’s staff and the constant reminder of their superiority. The natives were being forced to be self-sufficient, and with only occasional visits from their immortal Vanu, a new sort of courage and confidence was starting to surface in particular individuals. Think of it as the start of the specialization that invariably appears as hunter-gatherer tribes transform themselves into agrarian settlements and then into towns and cities.

Among the first of these specialists were those who worked with metals. This had started early with the gold, silver, and the tin that could often be found on the surface. With the discovery of major seams of metal ore came the need to develop ways of heating the rock matrix and then cooling it to separate the metals from the rock. The limitation was always the heat. Wood fires burned hot enough to liquefy lead when that was one of the metals found in the seams, along with silver. But until a way of increasing the burn temperature was found, silver, gold, and copper, with their higher melting points, remained largely inaccessible.

This is where Vanu bent his own rules. I suspect that he simply got bored

with human limitations and indifference. Generations had passed before his eyes and nothing much had really changed—not in Vanu's eyes, anyway. For most natives, fire had remained terrifying. Certainly they'd tamed it somewhat; they sat around their wood fires warming themselves on winter nights. After a successful hunt a wild pig or an antelope might be slowly turned on a spit by a small child blinking in the smoke. The smell of cooking meat would draw the children around the fire, only to have them run away, squealing, after being burned by flecks of hot fat spitting out from the sizzling meat.

Fires had to be constantly watched. If they grew too large and hot, the flames and sparks, lofted in the smoke when an unexpected wind picked up, were liable to start uncontrollable forest fires. Far more frequent, however, were the occasions within an encampment when the sparks from an open fire ignited the layers of dried leaves widely used as the roofing material for their huts.

In light of these threats, it is no wonder that humans retained an uneasy relationship with fire. Even a few of those most faithful to Vanu's teachings sometimes spoke nostalgically of their distant forebears—men and women who devoutly believed in the fire god, people who were willing to throw their children in the sacred flames to appease their god. When these regressive attitudes from those most loyal to him reached Vanu's ears, I'm sure he felt that his hand was being forced. It hadn't been easy for him: the next step in the metallurgical process held many dangers, and all the Prince's staff had been continually warned about it in their premission briefings.

Lead was the first metal to flow when the rock was heated, and, although too soft for spearheads, it could easily be molded into storage vessels and drinking cups. Vanu decided to interfere when this became common practice in areas of China where lead was most commonly found. He must have realized that generations of humans would suffer and die from lead poisoning—long before they ever understood that the lead was killing them.

I could feel Vanu's hesitation. He had to be able to warn the natives about the dangers of lead, while at the same time not scaring them away from metals forever. He was well aware that the introduction of metallurgy into a primitive culture would have a profound and long-lasting effect on that culture. Some suggest that metallurgy represents the true dawn of

technological innovation, because once it has been introduced there could never be any going back. This had been demonstrated on many an infant world.

Yet I knew Vanu had to act. He had to discourage everyone working with lead and could only do this by showing the metalworkers how to increase the burn temperature by intensifying the flow of oxygen. This then gave them access to tin and, later, at higher temperatures, to silver and gold.

Unlike Caligastia's northwestern kingdoms, Vanu had always firmly discouraged slavery in all its forms in his many territories stretching from Persia to the China Sea. The tenet that all mortals are Sons of God was at the center of his moral and spiritual teachings. As a consequence, there were not the large numbers of people available of mining as the slave-driven operations of Caligastia's East African operation. Vanu's ingenuity would be required to resolve this inequity.

This brings me back to the minehead and what I was able to see before I was chased away by those protective midwayers. I saw Vanu's miners had chipped their burn chambers out of the living rock at the wide entrance to the mine. It was very clever. As heat rises, they created their burn chambers in groups of three, one atop the other in the vertical rock wall, and connected the three ovens with a flue. By controlling the air-flow in the flue with dampers the temperature could be progressively increased from chamber to chamber, so silver and copper could then be melted. By adding two more chambers, the heat could be made to rise to over 1600°C in the top chamber. This allowed them to start smelting the iron from deposits recently found in southeast China. Using this stepped technique and by boring long flues up through the rock—I can only guess how long it must have taken them to hack their way through to the surface—they were able to radically increase the airflow in the chambers and thus the temperature of the fire.

This ingenious solution must have come from Vanu, because after the dissolution of Vanu's Eastern territories, stepped forges of this sort were not seen again in China until some 65,000 years later.

After silver had been separated from lead and the rock matrix, the metal was then ductile enough to be beaten into flat plates. Under Vanu's long-suffering tutelage, a new class of metalworkers sprang up. They learned to fashion the silver plate into the various drinking vessels and containers

intended to replace the previous ones made of lead.

Fortunately for those early tribespeople that Vanu stepped in when he did, because after only three or four generations many in the Chinese settlements were showing signs of high levels of lead poisoning. The birthrate had been dropping catastrophically. Of the children born, many more died in infancy than had previously, and some of the few survivors were deformed or severely brain damaged.

For Vanu this had been a serious setback. The symptoms of exposure to organic lead are so broad—from depression and neurological damage to loss of coordination and kidney failure—and can occur over such long periods due to the buildup of lead in the blood, that those afflicted would never have discovered what was slowly driving them insane before it killed them all off.

I knew Vanu would never allow that to happen. He had to step in.

Unfortunately, the very convenience of the malleable metal, and the relative ease with which it could be found, ensured that the use of lead had spread rapidly along the trade routes of southern Asia. This required Vanu and a small group of intimates to trek back and forth along the 2,500-mile silk road he had established on his first trip to China. They visited all the small settlements that had sprung up. Their warnings about the effects of lead poisoning were frequently disbelieved or ignored after their first visit, in spite of Vanu's imposing presence. But, as the natives' physical and mental deterioration grew worse, the damaging effects couldn't be denied, and by Vanu's second or third visit, all the lead vessels had disappeared.

I've heard Vanu argue this point, but from what I observed it had taken at least five or six generations for the natives in the various settlements to fully recover from the lingering effects of lead poisoning. Mothers with acute or chronically elevated levels of lead in their blood passed the toxins along to their children through the placenta and breast milk. Thus, each generation of surviving children grew to adulthood while accumulating progressively higher levels of toxicity. I knew this must be damaging their DNA, which is why I believe their recovery took so long.

I could also see how responsible Vanu felt about the whole unfortunate affair. He was devastated. He'd faced one of the great dilemmas encountered by all such off-planet missions, and he had evidently failed in his own terms and by the standards MA had expected of him. I could feel that he was

torturing himself. Should he have stepped in earlier to try to stop the widespread use of lead? Did his intervention constitute an offense against the prime directive of noninterference? He couldn't have just let them die, could he? They were like children to him!

Then Vanu was worrying if he cared too much. Had he fallen into the trap of sentimentality about which he and the rest of the staff had been so consistently warned? "Human beings are real heartbreakers," they'd been told. "Never become emotionally involved," the tutors would insist. "Love them, by all means, but love them with your eyes open. Never become sentimentally attached. They're not your children. You won't be doing them any favors thinking that they are. They need to live out their own lives and make their own mistakes. Besides, they'll break your heart if you do interfere."

I knew Vanu had been particularly observant of this warning. Apart from his faithful companion Amadon, with whom I'd frequently overheard him openly expressing his feelings, Vanu's approach was to courteously avoid any personal emotional involvement with the mortals in his charge. He went out of his way to discourage any hint of the inevitable hero worship. He was all too aware this was how Caligastia manipulated and used people, with his claim of godhood and his midwayers starting to think of themselves as divine beings.

This was a deceit Vanu wanted nothing to do with, even if it meant painfully holding his feelings in check and ultimately having to go into an almost permanent monastic retreat to avoid being the focus of the natives' attention.

"You know what I blame myself most for?" I overheard Vanu confessing to Amadon sometime after the lead scare died down. "I was so careful to avoid becoming attached to individual humans that I've become sentimentally attached to all of them—to the whole lot. Think of the progress we've made together. Look at what we've achieved. I had to intervene, Amadon. They would have all died. Every one of them. We'd have had to start all over again. I couldn't throw away what we've already accomplished, could I?"

His friend had never seen Vanu so distressed. Amadon had always spoken openly to his chief, and when Vanu had consulted with him prior to

intervening, he strongly supported taking action. Being a modified human being himself, Amadon had suffered acutely from what he'd seen as he traveled around with Vanu. Men, women, and children, in settlement after settlement, were manifesting the symptoms of lead poisoning. Families were breaking up, the elders were acting irrationally, and now lethargy was spreading through the natives, where once enthusiasm had greeted their visits.

Amadon was clearly thrilled when Vanu had stepped in against all his precious principles. It was the right thing to do—he must have interjected the phrase half a dozen times while Vanu was vacillating. This conviction made it all the harder for Amadon—the modified human—to take Vanu's bouts of self-recrimination too seriously.

However, with the original silver mine working at full capacity, a number of other newly discovered mines coming online, and an increased number of natives who came forward to be trained as silversmiths, all the lead storage containers, the cups and plates and other implements, were soon replaced by crudely made silver utensils. Although the population was still much diminished, within a few generations there were no signs of lead poisoning in the villages and settlements when Vanu and his entourage made their rounds and conducted their tests.

In the great sweep of history, in spite of the tragic losses, the debacle with lead poisoning in the Eastern Empire was a momentary setback in the steady expansion of the population. There would be other times later in history when this lesson would be forgotten and empires would fall, their ruling classes rendered degenerate and impotent from wine that leached the lead from their storage vessels.

If such serious matters can be considered ironic, within three centuries of Vanu's decision to prevent the use of lead utensils, some of the grandmothers in the burgeoning settlements remarked on the silver having some extremely beneficial effects. Not only was the infant death rate even lower than before the lead catastrophe, but the population's general health had unaccountably improved, as the longevity of the tribes-people was increasing.

Whether Vanu knew this would occur I was never able to find out, but I can't help feeling that he must have been aware of silver's chemical qualities and its germicidal effect on such a wide variety of microbial organisms. He

was immensely knowledgeable. I can only assume that he preferred to keep the information to himself, trusting that humans would eventually discover silver's healing properties for themselves.

As a result, Vanu was delighted to pass along what the grandmothers had noticed about the beneficial and healthy effects of using silver, as he traveled from settlement to settlement across his vast domain.

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In contrast to how the community moved from England to the Bahamas, no one was sent off to Mexico as an advance guard. While there may have been a measure of desperation to this—after all, there was nowhere else to go once the Beings had told them their destination would be Mexico—they agreed between them that it would be an act of trust, it would demonstrate their confidence in the Beings. It wasn't exactly as if they were being chased out of the Bahamas, although they were in fact just starting to alert the interest that the authorities would have had in any collection of thirty young people living together in one large house. Public curiosity was also bound to be provoked by the seven large German shepherd dogs that lived alongside them and that Mary Ann had been buying and giving to those closest to her. More will be said about the dogs as the narrative proceeds and as their canine companions come to play in increasing importance in the life of the community.

I would have given Mary Ann credit for being sensitive to this change in the official atmosphere had not my ward discovered many years later and in researching for another book that there was a particularly unpleasant article about the Process due out in one of the British tabloids at that particular point in time. While I can only infer this, I believe it's more likely Mary Ann may have caught wind of this imminent negative publicity—she was certainly well enough connected to have heard about it in advance—and realizing the tabloid in question would inevitably reach the British colonials in Nassau, it would have been enough to prompt her to keep moving. And I'll warrant she would have interpreted it as one of the signs from the gods if she had heard in advance.

This interested me as I moved around watching and listening in the weeks before they left Nassau. There were some, Mein Host among them, who had

thrown themselves wholeheartedly into accepting what the Beings were telling them. These were the ones who were most enthusiastic to share their findings with the rest of the group after the meditation was over. Some had said they heard the “voice,” or in some cases the “voices,” and wrote down what they’d heard after the voice (or voices) stopped speaking. Mein Host was among the few who said it felt more like automatic writing.

“After we start meditating,” he told the group when it was his turn to explain how he did it, “I sit very still and empty my mind . . .”

Mary Ann interrupted brusquely: “Tell them how you do it. Tell them how you release your thoughts.”

Mein Host flashed her a look: I knew he’d confided in Mary Ann a few days earlier. I wondered if he felt a confidence had been betrayed. Yet his hand was being forced.

“Well, it’s a bit childish, but it works.” His tanned face was flushed with embarrassment. “What I do is picture a billiard table in my mind. I see the soft, green felt from the top. Then, as I’m watching, billiard balls appear on the table, first in ones and twos, then more and more.”

Some of those listening were already catching each other’s eyes and suppressing giggles. Mein Host’s recent elevation to Mary Ann’s favorite had created ripples of resentment among some of those who considered themselves Mary Ann’s rightful confidants. Although my ward had been one of the original members of the group, leaving and then returning two years later, only to then be given the privilege of designing the interior of their mansion in Balfour Place, all this had bruised some egos. Now those who’d been ousted from their exalted closeness to Mary Ann by the elevation of someone they’d always considered an outsider had just seemed to be rubbing it in.

Mein Host pulled himself together and looked around the circle. Faces lit by candles turned to him, attentive again after the whispering.

“I know it’s a bit silly—but try it. It works.”

“But how do you do it? What happens then?” This came from Eddy, one of the young Scottish musicians who Mary Ann had enchanted on a trip she and Robert had taken to Scotland when they were still living in Wigmore Street. In Glasgow, the city of her birth, Mary Ann had met a local pop group and

had so bewitched them that all five young musicians gave up everything, and simply on Mary Ann's say-so, had moved down to London, all five ending up being persuaded to join the community.

Three members of the band had dropped out by the time the group moved to Nassau. It hadn't been easy for any of them—five tough young bruisers from the streets of the worst slums in Scotland, dumped, as I saw it, into a community of upper-middle-class English boarding school boys and girls. But Eddy had been made of sterner stuff and was staying the course in spite of having recently fallen out of Mary Ann's favor. He hadn't appreciated Mein Host's sudden, new exalted status, which added a touch of petulance to his question.

"Sorry, I haven't explained it right," Mein Hosted picked up where he'd left off. "You see, the balls all represent thoughts. What I try to do . . . what my job is . . . it's to get all the balls down into the pockets so I'm looking at a perfectly clear table. Sometimes the balls will pop back out of the holes again. That means another thought is trying to distract me. It can take a bit of time, especially if I'm stuck in my head . . ."

This time it was Robert who cut in, always one to belabor a point. "Do you understand, everybody? You see what he's doing? He's using his mind to clear his mind. It's really rather clever. He's tricking his mind to empty itself. Also, by equating his thoughts with billiard balls, he's giving each thought the same emotional equivalence . . ." Looking over at Mein Host, he asked, "Do you assign different colors for different thoughts?"

Mein Host was quiet for a few moments. "I've never thought about that . . . but yes, there are various colors sometimes. Not always. Sometimes they're just red and white like billiard balls. More often they're like snooker balls. Different colors. But I don't consciously color them. They seem to arrive on the table already in their different colors . . . maybe it just depends on how many thoughts are swimming around in my head."

Robert was about to interrupt again when he got a sharp glance from Mary Ann.

"Yes, yes," she said impatiently, "but then? What do you do then?"

"I get to the point at which there is only a single ball left on the table. If I've set my intention and asked the question, that'll be the last remaining ball.

Then I know I’m ready to record the answer. Then it’s a bit like taking dictation . . .”

Mein Host’s voice trailed off. I could feel his embarrassment. His emotions were so raw and close to the surface since his revelation of Mary Ann being the Goddess that he could suddenly weep with joy at the slightest hint of beauty.

The discussion then turned to the Beings, as it often did. Yet as much as they’d talked through the limpid tropical nights, it seemed that no one had a real explanation for these mysterious Beings. Who they were and where they came from remained a mystery. No one wanted to make a definitive statement about their origins or purpose. All they could say was that when they quieted their minds sufficiently, they were able to write down what they had heard.

There were a few others who believed it was purely intuition at work and perhaps one or two who were convinced that the whole business of hearing voices was merely self-delusion.

Since Mein Host’s life-changing discovery of the Goddess some weeks earlier, I could see he was now being swept along by Mary Ann’s charisma and brilliance. She had become the sun around which he, and an increasing number of the others, were now orbiting. Had my ward been able to form the thought at the time, he might have said that he could no longer tell whether his thoughts were his or Mary Ann’s.

Robert, although still generally regarded with respect, was becoming an increasingly shadowy presence in the emotional dynamics of the group. Mary Ann had always been the intuitive to Robert’s intellectual, but the gap between these two approaches was growing steadily farther apart. Back in London, under more controlled conditions, the pair had balanced each other with considerable elegance. Yet with all the distractions of city life stripped away, Mary Ann’s powerful influence was becoming the dominating emotional and psychic force in the community.

So it was that in the early months of 1966, a group—a couple less than thirty this time, two having dropped out and returned to London—of young men and women, tanned and healthy from their time in Nassau, arrived in Mexico City by plane from the Bahamas—together with their seven German

shepherds.

The Mexican immigration authorities seemed a little puzzled by this strange invasion, yet finally opened their country to the community, more to get the motley crew off their hands than out of any genuine sense of welcome.

It was pouring rain once they managed to extricate the dogs from the bowels of the airport and hire a small fleet of taxis to take them into the city. Getting settled took hours, because the first four hotels they approached refused to take dogs and turned them back out into the rain. Finally, they found a hotel that permitted dogs and had sufficient rooms for all of them—a large, decaying, five-story building, with a paint-peeled facade and crumbling windowframes.

Entering through a small door cut into the ornate double doors, they sloshed along the wide corridor to find the courtyard, with its three wilting trees, already flooding. Yet that scarcely mattered. They'd found a hotel that would take them—along with the dogs.

Unsurprisingly, it was not a hotel of the highest quality.

This did nothing to dull the excitement that underlay their exhaustion as they reminded each other that Mexico City was not going to be the final destination. The adventure was just beginning.

The rain pelted down into the open central courtyard, and water was already streaming into the rooms on the ground floor. The corridors on the four floors above were crudely colonnaded and open to the courtyard. They, too, were awash with water and with the detritus of years of neglect flowing freely along the haphazardly uneven tile flooring.

After a makeshift late-night meal, prepared with some resentment by the hotel's kitchen staff who were anxious to get home to see the extent of the flood damage, the group splashed back to their rooms on the upper floors.

Mexico City, at more than seven thousand feet above sea level, sits in a valley surrounded by mountains. There is no natural drainage outlet, and the valley has always been helplessly vulnerable to flooding. The original city was built on an island in the middle of a lake; over the centuries, as the city grew and expanded, the lake has been filled in with what turned out to be water-saturated clay. If that wasn't bad enough, some parts of the city have

sunk more than thirty feet into the soft clay due to the relatively recent overextraction of groundwater.

The hotel staff had every reason to want to hurry back to their half-sunken and waterlogged homes.

The food that first evening appeared so unpalatable that I've heard Mein Host comment more than once it was that one meal that put him off Mexican food forever. It did not bode well for their stay in the country, but they had no idea what awaited them when they plunged deeper into the hinterlands.

It was late, but no longer surprising to them, when they all found themselves called into the large double suite Mary Ann and Robert had taken for themselves. Mary Ann was known by that time to convene a meeting at any time of day or night. They were invariably at her beck and call, and she appeared indifferent to the state of the body and mind of anyone else.

The whole group was gathered in the suite, sitting cramped together on the ragged carpet, some leaning against the whitewashed walls, Mary Ann perched on the edge of the double bed with Robert behind her, his back against the carved wooden headboard. He had his knees up and seemed to be writing on a pad, but as I peered over his shoulder I saw that he was doing nothing more than doodling.

When I tuned in to his emotional body, I could see that things were a little more complicated than that. Robert had been feeling his power being steadily drained away and his influence diminishing among the group ever since they'd left London. At the same time, his need to feel relevant prompted him to be seen writing at every possible moment.

After everyone agreed, among much exhausted laughter and the sound of the rain beating against the windows, that Mexico City wasn't exactly welcoming them into its heart, Mary Ann gestured them into silence and declared that it was time for some contact with the Beings.

"The Beings got us here. Let's find out where they'll take us next," she announced to some nervous laughter. "So, the question is simple: Where do we go next? What happens now?"

Once again, all of them closed their eyes, and there was some wriggling of legs and bottoms as people settled into their meditating postures. After seven or eight minutes, there was the sound of pens scribbling briefly before Mary

Ann called everybody back in. When the sharing was over and each of them had a chance to say what they'd received, it became clear that the accumulated wisdom was to travel south. Not much more than that. Just go south.

Regardless, I could see that many of them were still amazed at how a room full of thirty people could all (except one!) come up with the same essential answer. From my somewhat detached viewpoint, and because I've been encouraged to speak freely about what I've seen and felt while accompanying Mein Host, I believe that the unanimity of the replies received in this meditation bonded the group to an even closer level of psychic intimacy.

The community was starting to think and move as one organism. This was the experience that Mein Host was trying to describe to Juliette as they were retiring to their room, anxious to get out of their damp clothes and feel the heat of each other's bodies. The rain had been unrelenting all evening and brought with it a mountain chill, rendered all the more extreme by their arriving directly from a tropical summer.

"Do you think this is all Mary Ann's doing?" Juliette asked thoughtfully as she spooned her long body into Mein Host's thin frame.

"Good we got the sex over with back in London," Mein Host whispered over his shoulder and wriggled his bottom against her stomach.

There was a long pause before Juliette replied with what I thought was a touch less conviction. "Yes, well . . . that was then . . ." her voice trailed off.

"Mary Ann's doing? You mean: Is she behind this closeness we're all feeling? It almost feels telepathic, doesn't it?"

No reply from Juliette, so Mein Host continued in a low voice. "Yes and no. I mean we wouldn't all be here if it weren't for her. But do I think she's somehow responsible for the bonding?"

"No, not that exactly." Juliette had come to life again. "Do you think she's making it happen in some way? Do you think she's reaching us on some level we don't know about to produce the answers she wants?"

Now it was Mein Host's turn to be silent.

* * *

It took almost three centuries for the settlements within Vanu's domain to

build up their numbers to where they'd been before the lead-poisoning crisis. Silver drinking vessels and utensils had completely replaced the lead ones, and the dangers of the metal's toxicity had entered the stories the elders would tell around the fire.

A favorite story I overheard more than once centered on a young boy who'd found a lead cup that hadn't been melted down and destroyed. By this time lead had become taboo, but the rebellious little boy thought he knew better. He kept his special cup secret from his family and drank from it whenever he could.

When he became a man, his family started noticing some unusual behavior. As a boy he'd complained of headaches and a whole array of stomach problems, but when he reached adulthood it became obvious that he was going to be of little use to the tribe. He was moving more and more slowly, he was depressed and irritable to his family, and frequently howled with pain throughout the night. He'd been falling in and out of comas, often emerging in a disoriented state of mind.

When one of the most ancient of the grandmothers called the young man over to her one night and pried open his mouth, she recognized the symptoms of the dreaded lead. She was old enough to have seen the last person in her settlement to die of lead poisoning, and once she saw the state of his mouth, with his teeth etched in a dirty blue color, she'd actually screamed in horror and thrust the man aside.

The next night this man was escorted far outside the encampment and left alone without food or shelter to suffer a horrible death.

After a long silence, the storyteller would peer around at all the children sitting in rapt attention before they were ushered off to sleep by their mothers. The story had its variants from settlement to settlement and changed over the years, but the terrified reaction of the children was always the same.

It was fortunate for Vanu that Caligastia had been preoccupied with the constant hostilities that had arisen between the various kingdoms within his empire. Although the Prince's approach was based on dividing and conquering, it was a time-consuming affair and required his constant attention. Had he not been busy pulling the strings from behind the veil, he might well have taken the opportunity to attempt to invade those he

considered his enemies while their numbers were so depleted. For some years his midwayers had been returning from their surveillance trips with reports on the problems Vanu's settlements were facing and urging the time for action.

I could see how infuriated Caligastia had become at this. There was obviously nothing more he would like to do—he was the god of this world, after all—than to exterminate those who opposed him. The whole world should have been his! It was a personal insult that Vanu's settlements existed and did not worship him—Caligastia!

Yet, try as he might to change this humiliating situation, the Prince ended up by falling victim to his own divisive manipulations. He'd managed through his proxies to inspire such suspicion and hatred between the rulers of the different kingdoms that it became impossible for Caligastia to pull together a large invasion army. He had finally managed to align three of the great kings who had grown tired of fighting one another to his cause. He promised vast rewards—gold beyond anything they'd yet imagined, an endless supply of slaves, and the capture of the most beautiful women in the world—if the kings would just storm in and conquer Vanu's territory.

Speaking through his priests, Caligastia excoriated Vanu's Eastern Empire as a den of godless barbarians. He them called them weak and disorganized. His priests preached the barbarians were evil, lower even than animals, and killing them would be cleansing the world—Caligastia's world—of all those arrogant scum. He told them their crusade would be simple, that Vanu would not be anticipating an invasion, that the enemy had no army to speak of because the settlements were so widely spread out over such a huge area.

Evidently Caligastia couldn't deny the vast distances, because his midwayers had been regularly reporting back to him. So he clearly hoped that by placing far more emphasis on the lack of resistance and the easy pickings, he'd be able to provoke their greed.

But it was too little, too late.

An invasion force had been hurriedly raised, yet their undertaking appeared doomed from the start. Many of the warriors who served at the behest of their various kings and tribal leaders were exhausted after the nearly constant hostilities between the various kingdoms. All those men wanted to do was to return to their homes and families.

The small army, drawn in fairly equal parts from the military forces of the three kings, also never became cohesive. Although the kings and their satraps may have made an uneasy peace with one another, the men loyal to them—after years of mutual hatred—found it almost impossible not to pick fights at the slightest provocation.

At this point Caligastia had established a fertile region of what was to become the North African coastline as his primary location. Much of this area that was later to become the coast of the Mediterranean was studded with lakes and endless forests of old-growth trees. It included Rhacotis, a small settlement that would later become the Egyptian city of Alexandria, and farther east across the Nile Delta and then curving north up into present-day Israel, and culminating in the great temple of Shalim in the location that was later to become Jerusalem.

Not having a material body, Caligastia didn't strictly need a house or a home in the human frequency domain, so he worked through his priests in a series of temples. The largest and most important of the temples were at either end of what he insisted on calling, with no apparent irony, his "sacred crescent." He divided his time between his two large temples, the first—now long-buried beneath the city of Alexandria—at one end of the crescent and, at the other, the more important of the two, which now lies deep under present-day Jerusalem. The remaining three smaller temples, one of which is under the waters of the Mediterranean, were equidistantly placed along the coastline between the two main ones.

What had horrified Vanu when his midwayer spies reported on Caligastia's activities was how skillfully the Prince was able to operate through a number of different local divinities: each god or goddess was worshipped in their own temple and was served by their own priests. He had finally been persuaded to permit this abrogation of his supremacy on the proviso that the priests of the various local divinities preached also of a greater god, one that stood behind all the lesser gods and goddesses.

While the midwayer/divinity to whom the Jerusalem temple was dedicated, for example, was a goddess of the dawn, the prevailing divinity in Alexandria happened to be a god of rebirth. That appeared to matter little to Caligastia. They were his midwayers, and they obeyed his orders. The priests, in turn,

took their orders from the midwayers, the strange beings who spoke in their heads and called themselves divine. And the people? They did what their kings and priests dictated: to refuse meant a lifetime sentence in the mines, or worse.

I had no doubt that Caligastia would have preferred to have all the worship directed toward him. That was the nature of his personality. Yet he was no fool. Given the primitive stage of human development, he soon realized, after some failed attempts at what he'd called with a sneer in his voice "my monotheism," that the people were still too strongly attached to, and far too dependent on, their various gods.

I could see how deeply Caligastia's pride had been wounded by what he'd taken as a personal rejection: it was a betrayal, to use his words, "of all I've done for this wretched little planet!" Absurd though it sounded to those of us observing, he ranted on about "the midwayers being loved more than me . . . that it was those damnable midwayers, those phony divinities, who were soaking up all that fine worshipful energy . . . and where does all this leave me? I'm the God of this world—me, Caligastia!"

Regardless of how dynamic we'd all thought our Prince was and how much loyalty we'd felt toward him, it was becoming generally accepted among us Watchers that Prince Caligastia had a remarkably well-developed penchant for complaining. This was when he showed his worst side: he blamed anyone within earshot for his own faults and seemed incapable of taking any responsibility for his own actions or their consequences.

This outburst was made all the more pointless because his midwayers had already spent so many centuries carving out their own psychic territories and claiming their own godlike status. Through them the Prince had been able to operate—to control and manipulate people—as effectively as he needed, with the added advantage of being able to keep his midwayers on a short leash. It had been his plan—his idea! And now the power was slipping out of his hands.

This was an open betrayal.

The Prince was furious.

After his anger had subsided and he'd recovered his dignity somewhat, his council of midwayers prevailed on him to stick to his original plan to remain

as a hidden presence. They certainly didn't want to lose the perks of godhood.

"A God behind the gods," claimed one of them, appealing once more to Caligastia's pride. "As it was before, with you behind the scenes. You'll still be holding the power."

This had pleased the Prince. All those present, to their obvious relief, must have felt Caligastia's auric field subsiding because another midwayer quickly picked up the thread. The midwayers themselves had a considerable investment in maintaining their divine roles. They'd been having far too much fun impersonating gods and goddesses.

"You will be like the 'invisible Father' that Vanu worshipped," said another midwayer. "You'll be the 'still, small voice' he was always going on about."

This drew a caustic laugh from the Prince, yet the idea clearly appealed to him. No more needed to be said. The midwayers knew they had won. And with the mention of Vanu's name, Caligastia called the meeting back to the matter at hand: the invasion and occupation of Vanu's Eastern territories . . . and the seizure of all that gold.

Caligastia had instructed the resident midwayers to command through their priests the attendance of the three kings, together with their military strategists, at the temple in Rhacotis. One was the ruler—a tyrant in this case—of the immediate territory surrounding the town that was growing up around the temple. The other two kings arrived some weeks later from the south with their ragtag armies. They had already formed an alliance, since their territories shared a long border, and they arranged to travel north together.

Their arrival was turned into a magnificent affair; the kings were richly feted in the tyrant's palace, while the armies were being fed and cared for by the women of the town. Rumors of what might be demanded of them swept through the men. Where would they go? And who they were to fight?

Arguments broke out, turning in some cases into shouting matches and fistfights that were only settled when bets started being taken between some of the warriors as to whom they were going to attack. Yet, for all the bets and guesses, there was not one among them who could even have imagined

they'd be ordered to cross the notoriously impassable Eastern Desert—least of all by the direct southern route!

No alliance between three rulers had ever been attempted before, so the men all knew this mission was going to be important—something new, perhaps even something dangerous.

They had no idea of just how dangerous it was going to be, however, or how few of them would survive.

Caligastia, speaking mediumistically through his senior temple priest, urged the three kings to prepare for the invasion as soon as possible, because the mild spring temperatures were soon going to turn into the blazing heat of summer.

When they heard their mission announced through the trembling lips of the insensate priest, the royal troika had originally greeted the words with a mix of horror and bravado. But as they came to talk among themselves about the promised rewards—about the gold and the slaves and the women—they gathered their courage. Despite this, they decided not to inform the rank and file about the desert crossing until the last moment.

Consequently, when the army was equipped and assembled and set out eastward in the direction of the great deserts of the Arabian Peninsula, the men finally realized what awaited them. A few tried to make a break for it before the column progressed too deeply into the desert. They were cruelly cut down by the men of a rearguard, deliberately placed half a mile behind the main army for just this purpose.

When news of this spread among the men, there were no more attempts to run away, and within days the warriors were already too far into the desert wasteland to make any attempt at returning to their homes feasible.

Any initial enthusiasm for a battle among some of the more ferocious of the warriors soon withered, first into despair and then into a more serious fight for survival, as they struggled farther and farther into the desert.

The men were unfamiliar with the terrain and completely unprepared for the life-sapping conditions. The distances were vast and the going laboriously slow. Men wandered off from the main column in the frequent blinding sandstorms, never to be found. The sun was merciless: a different sun from the one the men were accustomed to over the wooded hills of their

homelands. Here the sight of dunes stretching interminably to the horizon, unrelieved by a single tree, drove men who were sane at daybreak, insane and babbling by that same nightfall.

Strong men fell from exhaustion and heatstroke and died beside the slowly moving column. At first their comrades insisted on burying them in the sand, yet before long the numbers of the dead and dying became so great that they were simply left where they'd fallen. The blown sand covered their bodies soon enough.

The journey must have seemed endless to the men. I could only observe the terrible attrition, while being powerless to do anything about it. I've seen much of human death over the time I've been observing this world and have come to regard the fuss made about it with some indifference. It's no secret to me that life continues for human beings after the death of their physical vehicle. Yet, to watch the agonies of strong, proud men and women, each fighting the inevitability of their death to the last breath remains as painful to me now as it did then.

I believe it was fortunate that the armies the kings had promised for the venture turned out to be far fewer in number than originally pledged. Caligastia had hoped for a fighting force of at least 12,000 but had no choice but to be satisfied with the 7,500 warriors that the kings had managed to coerce into their service. But by the time they had reached the trail that hugs the southern shore of the Caspian Sea the survivors could barely be called an army.

Worse still, soon after arriving at the Caspian, it emerged that two of the kings had been plotting behind the back of the third, claiming to expose him as a defeatist and a traitor. Before any defense could be mounted, they quickly forced the undeserving king into a public execution, which further exacerbated the already tense situation between the remaining troops.

There was, of course, no formal border between the two vast territories: the ever-widening Arabian wasteland was brutal enough to discourage any contact between them—until now. The few thousand survivors of an army that set off more than ten thousand strong, including camp followers, accomplished what had previously been thought impossible. Barely alive, the men—and the very few remaining women—had limped down to the shore and thrown themselves in the sea.

With spirits restored somewhat, the two remaining kings divided the tasks required. They commanded some of their men to set up camp, others to explore for sources of freshwater, while wisely sending the remaining soldiers loyal to the dead king on hunting expeditions into the forests of the Alborz Mountains that rise to the south.

The fertile plain between the the mountains and the sea became an ideal place to make camp and take stock of the situation facing them. Counting the remaining warriors, plus those who straggled in later—having become lost somewhere along the way and then forgotten about—they had a fighting force of only 3,223 men. Among the camp followers, the losses had been even greater. The total of the surviving servants and cooks, the women (a few with children), the smiths and tent makers, and the slaves had diminished to less than 250. Nobody was bothering to count them too accurately. No one had really counted them to start with.

Warrior, servant, or slave—they were a hardy people for all that. Life had been tough enough before they attempted the desert crossing, and the survivors, once they'd regained their strength, could barely believe the paradisiacal conditions in which they now found themselves. After the agonies they'd faced along the way, the sandstorms and heatstroke and the death of most of their friends, it seemed to the survivors as if they, too, had died and gone to the happy hunting grounds.

Gazelles and antelope roamed the narrow strip of land at the foot of the mountains, apparently unafraid of humans and easily hunted. Seals abounded along the rocky coastline, and they were curious enough about humans to be trapped without difficulty. Freshwater was abundant; their scouting parties discovered so many rivers leading into the Caspian that they would never lack for pure water.

When they finally ventured out into the sea—as an enclosed body of water, the Caspian was a great deal larger in those days—they were astonished to find the vast numbers of fish and the enormous size to which some of them had grown. The catch a few nimble fishermen could gather, spearing fish from the rocky promontories, proved quite ample to feed the entire army.

Sturgeon, more than twenty-five feet long in some cases, were easy to catch. When one of the cooks discovered ovaries full of shimmering, black roe while preparing a large female sturgeon, a taste for this new delicacy

spread through the camp with gluttonous speed. Although not yet processed into the caviar it was later to become, the sturgeon roe was both nutritious and much enjoyed for the energy boost it provided the men. Salmon were equally easy to catch; I watched particularly quick-witted youngsters snatching them out of the air as the fish returned en masse up the rivers to spawn.

The climate was temperate, cooled by the winds off the sea, and after a few months of recuperation and no sign of the opposing forces, the army grew relaxed and indolent. Their original intention—the greed for gold, slaves, and women that had been driving them—seemed to have dissipated in their relief at having survived the ordeal. The two kings, each of whom had vied so vigorously for the post of supreme commander and had already arranged the killing of their third, settled into an uneasy truce.

No one, not even the most ambitious, wished to contemplate the long return journey and the images of almost certain death it portended. Likewise, it didn't appear as if either king were much interested in progressing with his mission. They were becoming far too comfortable.

Winter was fast approaching, and the mountains to the east of the Caspian were already gathering snow on their summits. The passes—and I could tell the kings were unsure whether there would even be passes—would soon become impenetrable, and that became justification enough to stay exactly where they were.

Crude dwellings had been thrown up as fall turned to winter and the winds howling off the mountains north of the sea carried the chill into their bones. Winter was hard for king, freeman, and slave alike—and colder than anything they'd been used to at home. The low salinity of the Caspian Sea made the northern fringes ice over as the temperature plummeted and a blood-red sun dropped behind the surrounding mountains. Fortunately for our inept invaders, the ice didn't extend far south, allowing them to continue to fish successfully throughout the cold season. The skins of the gazelles killed over the summer months kept them warm, and their diet of so much fish gave them the omega-3 fatty acids to keep their hearts strong and healthy.

The kings, who by birthright claimed the best of everything for themselves, had enjoyed the meat and made fine use of the four bearskins the hunters had brought down from the mountains. The bears had been slaughtered at a

terrible cost, each of the animals killing, or fatally wounding, a number of their pursuers. A large female, while protecting her cubs, clawed five hunters to death before finally dying herself, her cubs safely scattered by that time.

The kings were casually dismissive when it came to the hunters' sacrifice. They insisted that their men continue to hunt down these dangerous creatures, even sending them out in the winter. When the hunters returned empty-handed from their eighth trip into the mountains, having not spotted a single bear or found bear tracks in the snow or even seen the scat they'd have expected to find, the hunters convinced the kings their royal power had frightened all the terrible beasts away.

When the spring thaw arrived and the bears emerged from their snowbound caves, their hibernation over for the year, the hunters wisely avoided the hungry creatures. Between them, the men agreed to keep their silence about the bears' unexpected reappearance. As a result, both kings were deceived into believing it was their power that had chased away the bears. Carried away by the hunters' flattering words and preoccupied with holding on to their positions, they promptly forgot all about the creatures. And with the warm spring weather fast approaching, all thought of the bears' warm fur coats became irrelevant.

So the seasons came and went. No rescue party arrived, braving the desert, although they never learned that two parties had indeed set out, only to disappear in the desert. Neither had they seen any sign of the local natives in all the time they'd been there. A small expeditionary force had set out eastward to find a pass through the mountains but had returned without seeing a sign of human habitation.

As the months and then the years passed, there was nothing to do but to settle down and enjoy what they'd found. Permanent dwellings were built. Children were born. Warriors turned their hand to farming while others, of necessity, had to learn the trades of the day. The very best hunters and fishermen continued to feed the settlement, making sure to pass along their skills to their children, who in turn supplied the food for another generation of the rapidly increasing population.

Later, much later, when the northern trading route had been established, it was the distant descendants of these people who guided the great caravans and developed the indispensable caravanserai wherever water was found.

15

The Treasure of Eldorado

A Yucatán Welcome, Astral Espionage, the Politics of Violence, Arrivals at Midnight, and the Truth about Dogs

It was so simple to hire an old school bus in Mexico City that the community took it as a good sign that the Beings were actively supporting their mission, although what the mission was, nobody was quite sure.

They knew what they didn't want—that was expressed openly enough in their meetings. Their treatment at the hands of the British public and the contemptuous way in which Robert's teachings had been dismissed in the halls of academia had underscored their disdain for Western society.

These were young people, after all, and it was the tumultuous 1960s. Yet under their more predictable grievances lay a far deeper analysis of the ills of contemporary life. In probing so intensely into their own psyches, and rooting out the basic causes of their own unconscious compulsions, they felt they were able to better understand the basic motives and intentions that drive much of modern life. This understanding of how deeply embedded the problems were that beset not just Western culture, but the entire human species, was driving them to start all over again, free of the weight of the past.

The general feeling in the bus was one of hesitant excitement as the decrepit vehicle rattled out of the city heading for the highway south. I say *hesitant* because, as I eavesdropped on the various pairs sitting in the bus, I could feel that the radical decision to leave everything behind was still making a few of the less committed members of the community uneasy.

As the hours passed, the wide rear seat at the back of the bus became a hotbed of amiable dissent. This was led by Dave Pierce, a Canadian writer and stand-up comedian who had joined the community only weeks before they left London. In his late thirties, Dave was somewhat older than most of

the group and had a relatively successful career in England. At six-foot-four, he was a large and imposing man with a thicket of dark hair emphasized by a pair of glasses with heavy black frames. He was physically awkward, with something of the look of an oversized Groucho Marx, as if he'd never become quite comfortable with his bulky frame. He was a great one for funny stories. He frequently used them as a shield or a distraction, yet he could also be spontaneously funny enough to dominate most conversations with his sardonic and somewhat cruel brand of humor.

Dave had been interested in the Process back in London but hadn't traveled to the Bahamas with the others. After a change of heart a few months later he decided to join the group, but as it turned out it was just as they were about to leave Nassau. My ward, who had known Dave socially for a couple of years, was clearly astonished to see his friend and would have been well aware of how difficult it must have been for him to take this extreme step.

Dave had close ties with the American ex-pat community in London, and Mein Host had already met Norman Mailer and the Smothers Brothers through his friend and had seen for himself how well liked Dave was in their company—how confident and funny Dave was when he was bantering with them, how worldly and sophisticated. The very fact Dave had become interested in the Process in the first place had surprised my ward. He had certainly never encouraged Dave to join and had even been reticent to mention anything about his own involvement with the community.

So, when Dave turned up in Nassau, ready to commit himself to the Process, Mein Host was more taken back than anybody to see him there. Because Dave arrived so late in the day he missed a lot of the close bonding that had been taking place, including much of the work with the Beings and the level of trust that had been built up by following their guidance. Anxious to be included, yet not really buying in to "all this telepathy business," as I once heard him say, Dave evidently decided to simply go with the flow.

Mary Ann, intuitively sensing Dave's reticence and believing that he would make a great catch, had focused her formidably magnetic charms on him ever since he'd arrived in the Bahamas. One of her brilliant tactics was to flatter a person while simultaneously stripping away his or her ego. It was an extraordinary performance to witness because she was so perceptive, and her ability to dismantle someone's social personality was so effective that I might

well have been watching a brain surgeon at work.

Dave, like anyone else with the courage to stick around in the blazing intensity of the woman's psychic clarity, had first been fascinated and then bewitched by Mary Ann. Yet, when I examined his subtle energy systems, I appreciated how deeply invested he was in his mental intelligence and that for all his clever comedic bluster he was emotionally immature and sadly starved of true affection. This profound lacuna in his character made him eminently vulnerable to Mary Ann's enchantment. It was no surprise, therefore, to find that his spiritual intelligence was almost entirely undeveloped.

While Dave was clearly the focus of Mary Ann's attention and could casually banter with her as an equal in more informal situations, he never penetrated her inner circle, nor did he ever become one of her favorites. In this he might have later considered himself fortunate, since it permitted him to leave, to wrench himself away from Mary Ann's web, when the going got tough some months after arriving in the Yucatán.

This sense of himself as an outsider prompted Dave to take the back seat on the bus with four others, exchanging caustic wisecracks with anyone within earshot while the bus rumbled on.

The Mexican driver, hired along with his bus and scared stiff of the large dogs roaming the center aisle, drove with a rigid ferocity that reflected his anxiety to get the terrifying journey over with as fast as possible. Stops for refueling became a constant irritation for the poor man, as the dogs were allowed to get out of the bus to relieve themselves. This resulted in the inevitable sniffing around all the novel and provocative scents, together with the dogs' understandable reluctance to reboard the bus, accompanied by much shouting and foot stamping from their owners.

The driver, aware by the second stop that matters had slipped entirely out of his control, seemed to contract into a progressively smaller man at each refueling. He stood on his own, off to one side of the bus, furiously chain-smoking as many cigarettes as he could while the dogs were being rounded up and pushed back onto the vehicle. Invariably, one or more of the hounds would become so overcome by the novelty of all the delectable smells of a developing country that they would run off, further infuriating the driver.

With only one person in the community capable of speaking even the most

rudimentary Spanish, any attempts to placate the driver seemed merely to annoy him further. He'd made it obvious that no one was permitted to talk to him while he was driving, and the few attempts to engage him while the bus was halted were fruitless. They had no choice but to leave him alone in his anger and hope the bus would go the distance.

And what was the distance? Of course, no one knew. All they'd been told by the Beings was to head south. Passing by Vera Cruz without stopping, Robert could see from the map that they'd soon be faced by another choice or they would end up in Guatemala. At the next refueling stop, the driver became even more impatient as the group silently meditated together in the bus, seeking the next answer from the Beings.

The guidance came soon enough.

They were to aim for Mérida, the capital city of the Yucatán Peninsula.

Trying to explain this to the driver was not a simple affair. His spirits had risen somewhat when he got the false impression they'd reached their destination. The unfortunate man had originally leaped at the contract, because on top of an excessive basic rental fee he'd arranged a charge per kilometer traveled. I could see that he was fervently hoping he'd been able to communicate that this applied to his return trip as well—from wherever he dropped them off. Consequently, he'd originally been eager to drive the group as far as possible, because it would work to his advantage, and had greeted what he could comprehend of their uncertainty about their ultimate destination as just another example of gringo craziness.

The countryside became progressively more barren and the dwellings more tumbledown as the bus lurched northeast, now up the coast and through Campeche to finally arrive in Mérida in the late afternoon.

Everyone in the bus was silent until Robert stood up at the front and started telling people something about the city that he'd picked up by reading a guidebook.

"Mérida was founded by the Spanish in 1542—which makes it . . ." he peered down the bus at Dave, who was just starting to tell a joke to his posse on the backseat. He must have felt Robert's disapproval, because he stopped in midsentence and straightened up attentively, a parody of the good student.

"Listen, this is important," Robert continued impatiently. "Although

Mérida was a Spanish city, it was actually built right on top of an ancient Mayan city. It used to be called T'ho, or also its other name, Ich . . . caan . . . zihó." Having no idea of how to pronounce the names, Robert took it a syllable at a time, to some sympathetic laughter from those hanging on his words.

"Anyway," he continued more deliberately, "apparently this meant 'the city of the five hills,' which referred to five pyramids—they must be around here somewhere . . ."

This led to some gazing out of the window. There were no hills in sight: "Or pyramids!" commented Dave with a smirk to the person next to him.

"Look at that!" Robert exclaimed, pointing out the side window at the old cathedral. "Look, you can see some of the old Mayan stones they must have used to build the place."

"See, look, some of the stones are carved. And there—over there—look, there are more of them." This was from Paul, another of the architects in the group who'd been leaning out a window. And indeed there were Mayan signs in the stonework on the facades of most of the elegant old colonial mansions they'd passed by on the way in to the city.

"Listen to this!" It was Robert speaking again. "The Spanish had to build a wall around the city to keep the Mayans out. They had regular uprisings—all the way through colonial times . . ."

"They must have been furious with the Spanish!" Mary Ann cut in. "Seeing them plop their city right on top of their own! And then to watch the invaders building with stones ripped from the ruins of their ancient sacred city! Can you imagine!? What a terrible insult to an ancient people!"

There was a silence in the bus following Mary Ann's surprisingly passionate observation, broken only when Robert, who'd been flipping through the guidebook while his wife was talking, broke in with another of his facts. "Here's something interesting." He read out aloud, "'For a short time around the end of the nineteenth century, Mérida had more millionaires than any other city in the world.' They got rich by making a traditional alcoholic drink from some kind of cactus. Made 'em all rich."

"There's another insult!" Mary Ann again, a slight Scottish brogue taking over as it did when she was angry. "And I've no doubt it was a drink sacred

to the Maya, too. Right? So, on top of everything else, the people had to watch the colonists profane their religious traditions."

The driver was getting impatient at all this incomprehensible jabber and started up the engine again. The bus jerked forward, slamming Robert back down into his seat next to Mary Ann, as they drove off slowly to find somewhere they could gather to meditate together.

Seeing the main train station, a fine old colonial building with wide arched windows and a central campanile, decaying like all the other once-proud buildings, they pulled into a side street and got out to investigate. They left the dogs in the bus to keep their golden eyes on the terrified driver to make sure he didn't just cut his losses and drive off, leaving them stranded.

All thirty young men and women threaded their way through the graceful whitewashed colonnade to find the doors unlocked. The main hall was an open, high, elegant space, with a shining marble floor, although the station didn't currently appear to be in use.

Undisturbed, they sat on the smooth, cool, stone floor, settling once more into a meditation circle to ask the Beings where they should go next. Yet again, there was a remarkable unanimity among all the answers.

"Go down to the coast." "Follow the trail farther." "Find a track leading to the coast." "Continue your search until you smell the sea." So it went, each speaking in turn as they went around the circle. "Halt when you reach the sea." "Seek out isolation." "You will find your island." And there were other responses, too, which simply counseled them to follow their intuition.

On returning to the bus, they found the driver subdued and compliant. His time alone with the dogs—he'd been afraid to leave his seat—appeared to have worn down his machismo, and he was all too happy to see the group clambering back into the bus again, and then to get back on the road. He looked like a man who was praying that his nightmare was soon going to be over.

They had to drive around Mérida for a while, passing one classical Spanish colonial building after another. These were once elegant structures, now decrepit and uncared for, with paint peeling off the facades in long, dirty strips. The five architects in the community were craning their necks to better see the buildings, with Mein Host on his feet scrambling over the dogs

sleeping in the aisle to get to the front to see better. The driver, whose irritation was building again after being told to aimlessly circle the city, hunched over the wheel and growled at my ward to stay back.

It had grown dark while this haphazard exploration was taking place. Before the driver finally exploded in fury, they found a narrow, barely paved road that held the vague promise of leading to the coast.

Their headlights lit up a landscape that was flat and dry. Scrub trees crowded together along either side of the road to take advantage of the additional rainwater running off the tarmac. Beneath the trees were occasional henequen plants, the very variety of agave Robert had been talking about earlier. After they'd spotted half a dozen plants, Robert was explaining to anyone who was listening that the drink was called *Licor del henequé* and that it was still being distilled in small amounts by the Maya. Caught for a moment in the high beams, the henequens' sword-shaped leaves thrust outward like small explosions of light.

Now sounding as if it were coming to the end of its long life, the old bus took over an hour to travel the twenty-four miles to the coast. The dogs were given water once on the way, I suspected as much to pacify the driver as for the dogs' sake, who'd all had their chance back in Mérida. Mein Host and a few others took the opportunity and jumped out of the bus to keep an eye on the dogs. I watched them talking about how close the ocean must be, as they excitedly sniffed the salty air in anticipation.

When they reached the end of the road in the tiny village of Sisal, the night was moonless and pitch black. Barely a village, it appeared to be a handful of fishing huts perched on the sand dunes only yards back from the Gulf of Mexico. There was no electricity, no lights at all coming from any of the windows. The village dogs were barking—the bus driver had left the engine running. The German shepherds, sensing perhaps better than their owners that they'd arrived at their final destination, were yapping happily and dancing around at the end of leashes. Everyone was milling around, not quite sure what to do next. It was chaos.

Paying off the driver, who by this time was almost weeping in relief, was easier than John anticipated. John had been an accountant before joining the Process, so it had seemed logical to Mary Ann that he should be the one chosen to handle the community money. He knew more than anybody how

low the funds had sunk and was resisting the idea of compensating the driver for his return trip. Mary Ann must have overheard him quibbling with the man, because she quickly moved over to where they were standing. I watched his face drop as Mary Ann was telling him not only to pay the man the full sum but also to give him a large tip.

Mary Ann could be extremely free with other people's money.

Since in all senses the community had reached the end of the road, because there was nowhere else they could go, they unloaded their minimal possessions with the faith that the Beings had intended them to end up there.

Finally, the bus chugged off after the driver, with tears—this time of gratitude—staining his nut-brown face. He had insisted on hugging all of them before leaving a gaggle of disoriented and exhausted young men and women, alone, in the dark, and in the middle of nowhere.

⁂

When the first expeditionary force, and the two subsequent rescue missions Caligastia instructed to cross the desert disappeared without a trace, the Prince had to give up on his invasion plans.

The priests, through whom he'd issued his instructions, lost a certain amount of prestige as a result of these failures. However, the ritual self-immolation of the high priest and the subsequent quantity of human sacrifices demanded by the fire god they served, soon restored the awe and respect of the fearful populace.

Thus started what I think of as one of the darkest eras I have had the misfortune to witness in my time here.

Life in this world had never been particularly easy, as you will have gathered from this narrative. For a number of millennia following the angelic rebellion, the chaos that ensued effectively destroyed any semblance of what MA's mission had so laboriously built up in the almost 300,000 years the city was flourishing. It was true. All the irritation and frustration we went through in the era before the revolution was far preferable to the terrible times that followed.

I'm speaking here of Caligastia's Northwestern Empire after the Prince finally felt confident enough to abandon all restraint. He'd convinced himself

by this time of his divine right to act exactly as he saw fit. He knew he was unlikely to get any interference from MA, and with Vanu well out of the way and forgotten about, he instituted a regime across his many principalities of such harshness that this world soon became known as the most unfortunate of all thirty-seven planets aligned with the rebellion.

Vanu's many small settlements, distributed from Persia to China, including the Indian subcontinent as well as on some of the larger of the islands in Indonesia, all followed Vanu's teaching to one extent or another. Progress had been painfully slow without a full complement of staff. Everything had depended on Vanu and the few midwayers who remained loyal to him. Superhuman though Vanu might have been, he was a single being who could only be in one place at a time.

Caligastia's modus operandi was different. On the few occasions his midwayer espionage agents had managed to break through the layers of subspace shrouding and return with news of Vanu's slow and halting progress, I could see that the Prince thought the comparison laughable.

Although the failed invasion was never to be talked about, the Prince was still savvy enough to want to keep an eye on his enemy. This was not as simple as it might appear. Granted, he may have had many more midwayers at his disposal to do the spying, but it didn't take more than half a dozen of Vanu's midwayers to throw up so much subspace scrim as to make it almost impossible to penetrate. Naturally, this was also true in reverse. However, Vanu's interest in Caligastia's empire had become negligible after the invasions failed and the Arabian deserts were proving to be such an effective barrier.

The new regimen the Prince had been implementing for the past three hundred years throughout his many principalities had capitalized on the mutual suspicion and hostility his midwayers were covertly sowing among the ruling kingdoms. As previously mentioned, this had resulted over the years in two dominant powers, each of which had absorbed its immediate neighbors into its own sphere of influence.

Almost all this activity was focused around the Mediterranean region and the Middle East, to use contemporary terms, with one kingdom stretching from the Atlantic coast of Spain, through southern Europe to the western shore of the Black Sea, and then south to include Turkey and Palestine. The

second kingdom extended along the North African Mediterranean coast to Morocco and then south down through Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia to Kenya and the Great Lakes, with its political center near Alexandria.

It should also be remembered that what is now the northern Sahara Desert was at this stage, before the changing climate later rendered the whole region a desert, a fertile, wooded region with many shallow lakes, rich in game, and with a rapidly growing human population.

Caligastia would have been well briefed prior to the mission about the anticipated climatic changes that he might encounter during the half a million years he was expected to remain active on the planet. He understood the rhythmic pulsing of the ice ages. He knew that the most recent of the great ice sheets had started to recede, and the ice sheets that had pressed down to cover most of North America, northern Europe, and Russia were now gradually withdrawing.

Back around the time of the rebellion some 110,000 years earlier, when climatic conditions had been dramatically changing for several thousand years, this most recent period of severe glaciation had started reaching deep into the Northern Hemisphere. This had forced a massive southerly migration of the tribes that had ventured into the northern regions of Europe, as well as the many species of animals and birds seeking warmer habitats. This migration south had contributed significantly to the chaos Caligastia encountered when he tried to bring the kingdoms under his control.

However, because the ice sheet took almost 100,000 years to creep so far south, Caligastia also knew the ice would take about the same length of time to fully withdraw. This information was giving him the distinct advantage of knowing which territory would open up as the climate changed and the conditions became progressively warmer.

The priests serving the Prince gained the most from this knowledge. To the expanding population pressing northward, as they followed the retreating ice, their priests seemed to have a supernatural prescience about the changing climatic conditions.

Prince Caligastia’s scheme, as far as I could discern it at the time, was to ratchet up the speed of technological advancement by supporting a constant cycle of violence between competing powers. He appeared to have no

preference for one side over the other; he only seemed concerned about subtly increasing the level of fear and anger on both sides, provoking their technological ingenuity and their ethnic pride. At first over the centuries, and then over the millennia, a succession of rival kingdoms rose in opposition to one another, each with a growing number of specialists devoting their creative energies to the development of more and more destructive weaponry.

With his midwayers working through priests on both sides of the conflicts, Caligastia maintained overall control of technological development. From observing him in action, I came to understand that he never allowed one side to gain too much technological superiority over another, because that inevitably slowed down the speed of progress.

Thus, while great powers rose and fell, the weapons they developed continued to get more and more deadly.

This puzzled me for a long time, because I saw no good reason why Caligastia was pushing so hard for weapons development. It was hard to believe that he gained any personal satisfaction from the terrible violence and the massive death toll resulting from the almost constant state of war, generation after generation. For all his many faults, Caligastia was no sadist. He was largely indifferent to human life by this stage and was only interested in people to the extent that he could use them to further his plans.

When I heard the Prince talking with a couple of his senior midwayers, however, I started to understand what he was working toward. I should have known better. He had never forgotten his humiliation at the hands of Vanu. Although he'd kept it quiet, his pride had been so severely wounded by the failed invasion that he'd become obsessed with the idea of avenging the defeat.

Living endlessly, human time meant little to Caligastia. He could afford to wait as generations of humans lived, reproduced, and died, while their inventive genius produced progressively more and more destructive weapons —and the inevitable weapons delivery systems.

As I said previously, this instigated a long, dark time, which I believe ultimately fell completely out of the Prince's control and led directly to a series of dreadful catastrophes that almost finished off the human race.

# # #

One of Mein Host’s gifts is a quiet enthusiasm that allows him to move through most (though by no means all) trying situations with a certain degree of equanimity and grace. I understood him well enough by now to know how, by throwing himself so fully into whatever required doing, he was able to maintain his interest. Yet what was to follow, even though it taxed every fiber of his being, was still a training. When this faculty was more fully developed, it would serve him well later in his life over the course of his contact with dolphins, angels, midwayers, and extraterrestrials.

John and Hugh, the two friends Mary Ann and Robert had picked up from Robert’s Oxford Union talk, finally managed to find a local man in Sisal with one of the broken-down fishing cottages he was prepared to rent.

It was close to midnight when the man, none too happy at being abruptly awakened from his sleep, led the community down the dunes. Stumbling along in the dark, they could see, as their eyes adjusted to the darkness, that they were walking on a patch of sandy scrubland ending in a small cliff to their right, which dropped down about twenty feet to the beach. There was the white froth of the incoming waves, almost translucent with bioluminosity, breaking softly on the sand below them.

They passed a dozen ramshackle huts, gray lumps against the darkness, separated by palms and situated some fifty feet back from the cliff edge, before being guided into an equally broken-down shack at the end of the line. There was no exchange of keys because there were no locks. There was barely a door. As they all crowded into the two small rooms, I noticed the self-styled landlord slipping away unnoticed into the night.

Considering themselves fortunate to have found any kind of roof at all to put over their heads, they shuffled cautiously around, some lighting candles while others cleared out the rubbish. At the back of the rear room two people were pinning up a curtain to give Mary Ann and Robert the privacy she always required, no matter what the conditions under which the rest of the community were living. Still others were going through their luggage to find anything that could be laid down to soften the chipped tile floor. Suitcases and bags had to be put out onto the sagging timber verandah to liberate a bit more space. The dogs were also firmly instructed to stay outside with the luggage and, after much circling and pausing and circling again, each of them found his perch on top of the bag of his choice. It would have taken the Dog

Whisperer to steal from those bags!

A word about those dogs, because they played an unusually active role in the daily life of the community: Some years later, scandal writers, hoping to vilify the Process in their books, would assert that the pack of German shepherds were adopted because of Mary Ann's avowed admiration for Adolf Hitler. While there may have been a modicum of truth to this assumption, it was not why the dogs became part of the community. Mary Ann wasn't trying to emulate Hitler. If anything, it was more that she saw in der Führer something of the courage and boldness of her own autocratic personality. She certainly never approved of Hitler's cruel methods. Yet, I've overheard her claiming it took someone like old Adolf and herself to recognize the truly regal nature of the German shepherd bloodline—so close to the wolf and yet so loyal to their human companions.

The pack was later to swell over time to about twenty before gradually diminishing, as the short-lived dogs died and weren't replaced. In these early days there were only seven dogs, three of whom belonged to Mary Ann and Robert; the other four were presented by Mary Ann as gifts to those in her inner circle.

The names given to the dogs, all through Mary Ann's inspiration, will perhaps offer the first clue as to what might be fomenting beneath the surface of Mary Ann's consciousness. Robert's dog, the largest, the most magnificent, and yet the meekest Alsatian you'd ever meet, she named Jesus; her own, a pitch-black shepherd, she called Satan; and the third, an ill-behaved hound, she named Ishmael. He was the puppy of the three and had insisted on accompanying her from the pound in London when she was picking up Satan.

Within a month or two, she'd given Seth, a short-haired, ill-tempered Alsatian, to John; the burly, white, sweet-natured Lucifer to Hugh; another pure white and invariably skittish hound she named Beelzebub she gave to Jonathan; the long-haired Isaac went to Richard—the young man with whom Mein Host traveled to India. The three others, acquired soon after and all with biblical names, I don't need to mention because they won't feature prominently in this narrative.

The dogs were deeply loved by their owners, each of whom would have died trying to save the other. The German shepherds were never acquired to

impress or to inspire fear or even to protect their owners. It always seemed clear to me that the dogs represented a compensation for the growing distrust and skepticism directed toward human beings. Mary Ann, the main instigator of this attitude, would frequently claim to “far prefer animals over humans any day of the week.”

Thus, the dogs occupied a very specific and unusual place in the group’s communal life. They were always fed first with the best raw meat that could be scrounged up, and they were treated by everybody as equal members of the community. It was generally believed that although the dogs were remarkably intelligent for dogs, their true skill lay in the emotional realm. A dog’s sensitivity to the emotional state of both his owner and the group as a whole was regarded as a reliable mirror, even if this notion was sometimes taken to ridiculous extremes.

With so many alpha males among the dogs—and with perhaps two exceptions, females who joined later, they were all male—there were the inevitable fights for dominance, some vicious and some more good-natured, as the dogs worked out the pecking order among themselves.

These canine interactions, however, were carefully watched by Mary Ann, as she liked to maintain that she could tell a great deal about the unconscious motivations of the owners from the behavior of their dogs. For the various dog owners, this clearly added an unnerving level of emotional and psychic transparency. These appraisals were taken all the more seriously because they issued from the mouth of the *Oracle,* the title Mary Ann had recently chosen for herself, just as she accorded the title *Teacher* to Robert at the same time.

What I found particularly interesting, as an observing angel—because I’m frequently privy to information not available to Mein Host, or humans in general—is to see how close to the deeper reality human intuition takes them. In this case, in spite of the dogs’ formidable names, chosen by Mary Ann, perhaps on a whim or possibly as a result of the revelatory channeling of the dogs’ true names, as she liked to claim, there was indeed an unusual feature to this whole affair. Not only were the dogs said to mirror their owners’ unconscious minds, but they were also believed to reflect the essence and disposition of their namesakes.

So why these names? Mary Ann certainly wasn’t religious; neither was Robert. The spiritual element had entered first back in London as a result of

the depth of their self-inquiry with the E-meter, but it had little to do with religion and how it's practiced. Ask people what their purpose in life is and you will get a spiritual answer under all the more quotidian responses. Yet there was never any serious talk of Jesus, Satan, or Lucifer that I overheard back in London or in Nassau.

The dogs were bought and named during the two years Mein Host was taking his sabbatical before rejoining the community, so neither of us was present when this was happening. Therefore, while I can't be sure of this, it fits Mary Ann's inflammatory nature to have chosen the names as a deliberately provocative gesture. She had a deep distaste for organized religion of any sort, just as she seemed to enjoy tweaking the delicate sensibilities of those who might be appalled at the names *Satan*, or *Lucifer*, or, even worse for some, *Jesus*, given to dogs.

And, indeed, it must have been most disconcerting for an innocent householder to be woken up at three o'clock in the morning with the shouted words "Satan! Satan! Come back here! At once!" echoing in the dark, empty street outside their window.

Inside the hut, the people, much like the dogs outside, were curling up for sleep, exhausted from being rattled around all day in the bus. As I moved through the rooms I could feel a wide variety of emotions boiling away under the surface in the subtle energy realms. There was as much excitement as there was a very real fear among a few that the whole journey was madness. Some of the younger ones had never left England before and yet here they were, stranded on a desolated spit of land at the end of the universe, with no idea of what was going to happen next.

Mein Host found his place in the corner of the room closest to the door and laid out his blanket to own the cramped space before going outside for a last cigarette and to brush his teeth. There he found Vanessa—she of the divergent guidance—sitting out on the edge of the verandah by herself. He lowered himself down beside her and lit his cigarette after offering her one. She smiled and lifted her left hand to show she already had one going, but I could see that she was touched by his gesture. Considering how close the community had grown over the previous months in Nassau it was odd they had barely ever talked with each other.

“I’m getting so sick of this,” she said despairingly, after sitting in silence for a few puffs of her cigarette. That was a pointed way to start a conversation. A surprised look appeared on Mein Host’s face when she turned to him with tears welling up in her dark eyes and trickling down her face. He put his arm around her shoulders in comfort and felt her shivering in spite of the heat.

“I’m lost. I don’t know what to do.” The words came out in a rush—she must have been holding them in for a long time. “I thought this was what I wanted, but I’ve been wrong every time we’ve asked for directions. How could that happen? I mean, I report on what I’m getting, yet it always seems to be the opposite of what everyone else says . . .”

“But that’s what’s so useful. That’s how we know . . .” Mein Host said supportively, giving her shoulders a friendly squeeze and trying to buck her up.

“Yes, yes. I know,” she interrupted. “‘If Vanessa says the opposite, we must be right.’ Believe me, I’ve heard that a few times. Doesn’t make it any better. I feel like a laughingstock, and I don’t know why it’s happening.”

Vanessa was a somewhat unlikely candidate to be drawn to the community in the first place, and, as it turned out, she was among the first to leave. She was the rebellious daughter of a world-class intellectual, and it was evident to me that Vanessa had far more emotionally invested in shocking her father with the very worst threat she could come up with than in any true commitment to the group.

Mein Host wasn’t aware of this dynamic, or he might have suggested that all the signs were indicating that perhaps she wasn’t actually meant to be in the community.

“And, I don’t think Mary Ann likes me.” This brought forth more tears. “She’s always making fun of me . . . I know she hates me . . . she’s never spent any time with me. I don’t know why I’m here. I don’t even like the people much.” She smiled weakly up at my ward who was stubbing out his cigarette and preparing to get up.

Never much of a complainer himself, he had little time for the complaints of others. I could feel his awkwardness. There wasn’t much he could have said to her anyway: she was far more interested in moaning about her

circumstances than in getting to the root of why she was unhappy.

“No, I don’t mean you, silly,” she was stroking his hand and seemed to cheer up somewhat at what she thought was his kindness. He’d been taken aback to hear Vanessa blurting out her grievances, unaware that some people in the community might not be quite as enthusiastic about the Process as he was.

He gave her a paternal kiss on the top of her head as he was getting up, and she let his hand slip through hers in a manner she might have intended to be romantic—yet it clearly lacked any erotic substance. Smiling back at Vanessa, he disappeared back into the darkness.

With no water available, he scrubbed at his teeth with a dry toothbrush while walking along to the edge of the cliff. A gentle offshore breeze had cleared away the humid heat of the day, and more stars than he’d ever seen before were glittering in a clear sky. I could feel his excitement rising as he stared out into the blackness of the Gulf of Mexico. Spray-flecked lines of waves emerged out of the darkness like a regiment of marching ghosts, only to collapse and fade into the beach below him. His nose wrinkled at the unaccustomed tropical scents mingling with the rich, burned-plastic smell of rotting seaweed.

Like almost everyone else in the community my ward had foresworn cutting his hair, which reached down two inches below his shoulders and was now wafting gently behind him in the wind. There was no dogma in this. Letting their hair grow out felt like the natural thing to do for many of them —a symbol of their separation from society and its strictures. Later, Mein Host heard some talk from Mary Ann about long hair being an excellent antenna for receiving information from other dimensions.

He was to tell Juliette the next day that it was one of the high points of his life, standing out there alone on the edge of the world, a stranger in a strange land, facing an entirely unknown and unpredictable future.

⁂

If I’m to plot the events described here on a prehistorical time line, the inevitable conflict brewing between these two Western powers within the Prince’s domain was coming to a head around 85,000 years before the current era.

I call the conflict *inevitable* because by this time I had a much better idea of Caligastia's plan. By encouraging a level of constant hostility between the two dominant powers, he'd forced them into what became the first of the world's major arms races—the first of many, as it was to turn out.

As the centuries passed I observed the skill Caligastia used in manipulating this constant development of ever more sophisticated and deadly technological weaponry. Seldom was any advancement lost, because whenever a victor emerged in this ongoing battle for supremacy, the vanquished power's technology was taken over, carefully examined, and the strong points were then capitalized on in order to produce ever more destructive weapons.

Any study of weaponry over the many stages of human evolution will demonstrate a subtle symbiotic interplay between their development and the impact those weapons have on the societies that devised and made them. The recent cold war from 1947 to 1991 vividly illustrates this dynamic. Weapons both shape society and are, in turn, shaped by the fears and ambitions of that society.

Yet, another way in which a society becomes dependent on weapons development are the spin-offs that prove so valuable in everyday life. In this way, any society that seeks to be dominant will gradually and inevitably become a technologically advanced one. The few societies in history that have chosen a less belligerent path have invariably been overrun, sooner or later, by a more aggressive one. That's been the way of the world ever since the days of the rebellion.

Contemporary scientific belief holds that the human species—from its infancy about a million years ago all the way through to the modern era—has been moving in one fairly continuous chain of development. Many indigenous cosmologies, however, teach of a number of previous global civilizations—generally four—that have flourished before their destruction. It is a modern hubris to believe the technology of today represents the single summation of the human journey.

The rare examples suggesting that this might not be so tend to be ignored or brushed neatly under the carpet, including stones cut and joined with the utmost precision; a level of astronomical precision that continues to perplex; areas in the Sahara where the sand has fused as a result of intense heat; the

dressed stones of Baalbeck, some weighing in at more than eight hundred tons and mysteriously transported from a local quarry. These, and many more puzzling developments that will be emerging over the years, continue to challenge this limited viewpoint.

Of necessity, these examples are relatively recent, drawn from merely the past fifteen thousand years of human activity. Little remains of anything from an earlier date. What hasn't disintegrated back into dust has been lost in the earthquakes, fires, and floods that have periodically interrupted human affairs.

There are some happy exceptions to the natural forces of entropy and decay that I have no doubt will be revealed at some point in the future. These objects and artifacts fall under a covert midwayer operation that has become known as the "Treasure of El Dorado," lying at the root of many tenacious legends about a city of gold lost somewhere deep in the jungle.

I admit that I was curious when I first observed what was going on, not really comprehending what this small group of select midwayers were doing on such a regular basis, until I'd watched them on a few occasions.

The first time was purely accidental. I was completing a personal survey of one of the great mansions near Alexandria, flitting (as I like to think of it) through the elegant rooms. I'd taken to doing these periodic reviews, entering homes and public buildings, observing how people—rich or poor—lived out their lives. I was frequently able to get a better idea of the overall state of a society in this way than by what I overheard in the corridors of power.

This particular mansion had evidently belonged to an immensely wealthy man, one of Caligastia's bankers, I supposed, judging by some of the rare ornaments on display. The house was deserted and yet, curiously, everything in it lay in its correct place undisturbed, as if the family had mysteriously disappeared overnight. The man must have had glorious taste, because every article in the place was exquisitely designed and made.

Then, slipping around a corner, I saw a small group of midwayers, one of them manifesting in the physical world as a tall, blond-haired, muscular man, all looking carefully at a large gold cauldron. It was elaborately carved with a four-inch strip that was encrusted with precious stones encircling the rim. I could tell immediately that it was a sacred object, used ceremonially and completely out of place in a banker's mansion.

This was a beautiful piece of work, but I had no time to admire it. The next thing I saw was the large blond man wrestling the gold bowl off its plinth and carrying it out of the house, accompanied by the other four midwayers looking on from their ultraviolet domain. It was all very surreptitious, and I had to make sure the midwayers weren't aware of my presence. That time I simply made a note of it in my mind and decided not to follow them. I hadn't yet completed my survey.

The third time I spotted something like this happening my curiosity got the better of me. Again I saw the tall blond man, this time in a magnificently appointed temple on one of the hills outside a settlement that in later ages would become Jerusalem. His little coterie of midwayers surrounded him and once again remained invisible to human senses.

I couldn't see the object he was holding until he turned with this beautiful artifact in his hands. It appeared to be a staff made of ivory with a pair of ornately carved serpents spiraling in opposite directions along the length of it. I caught a small explosion of red light as a beam of sunlight struck one of the ruby eyes before the man had wrapped a cloth around the staff and headed for the door. This time I decided to follow the small group.

Although I shadowed the group to the entrance of a cave complex that I knew burrowed deep into the limestone hills, I chose not to accompany them inside. I admit to a touch of claustrophobia, not an unusual affliction for an angel in my position. When they finally emerged some hours later it was without the ivory staff.

The next time I saw this happening was a couple of hundred years later. On this occasion it happened within Vanu's territory as I was visiting one of the great monasteries that had grown up around the Temple of the First Source and Center in northern India. I wasn't able to see the object. It was in a small mahogany box and must have been very special, based on the reverence with which the tall, dark-haired woman was carrying it.

I plucked up my courage and followed them unseen into a deep chasm in the Himalayan foothills—a massive split in the land broken open by some tectonic event—and then deeper still into caverns leading to farther caverns, deeper and deeper into the body of Mother Earth. When they finally reached their destination and I was able to peer into a relatively small cave, it was hard for me to believe what I was seeing.

There’d been a loud hiss and then a rush of frigid air when the woman reached high up above her head and touched a slight projection from the smooth rock face about nine feet off the ground. The solid rock seemed to dissolve in front of them, leaving a hexagonal entrance into a chamber beyond that was lit in some way I couldn’t understand.

What I could see and was unable to make any immediate sense of was an extraordinary profusion of objects, all of different sizes and shapes, some covered in animal skins, others gleaming gold in the soft light—hundreds and hundreds of beautiful artifacts receding as far as I could see into the cave. There were some machines in there, too.

So this was the Treasure of El Dorado! Secret caches of some of the best, the most brilliant, and the most beautiful of the artifacts created by humans, from the time of the arrival of the Prince’s staff through to the present time.

I’ve since come to learn that small teams of midwayers have been assiduously squirreling away these special objects in deep caves and caverns all over the world and that these hidden hordes will be revealed only after humanity has made its next great transformation.

Plate 1. *Piercing the Veil*. Another realm is a heartbeat away.

Plate 2. *Interdimensional Allies*. Do midwayers exist within the ultraviolet realm?

Plate 3. *Seeing with Sound*. Do dolphins experience angelic guidance?

Plate 4. *The Evolution of Wisdom*. Dangerous choices face the Seeker of Truth.

Plate 5. *The Passionate Revelation*. Hidden influences impacting on the world mind.

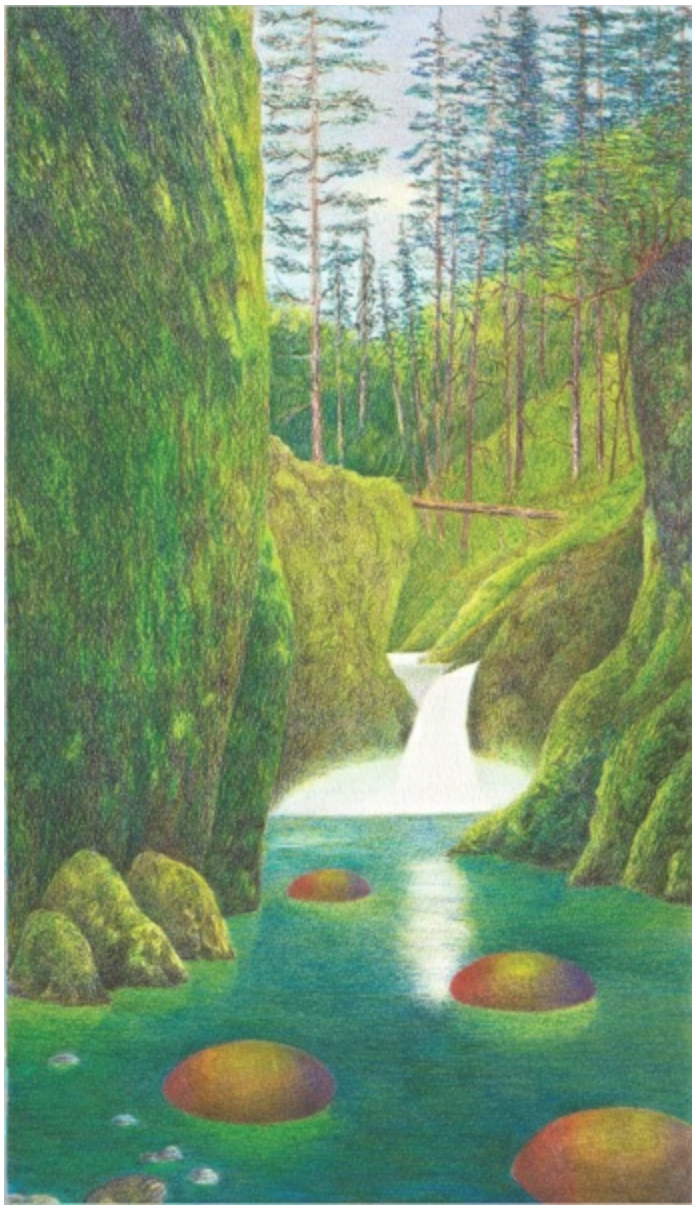

Plate 6. *Natural Miracles*. Portals to other worlds can hide in plain sight.

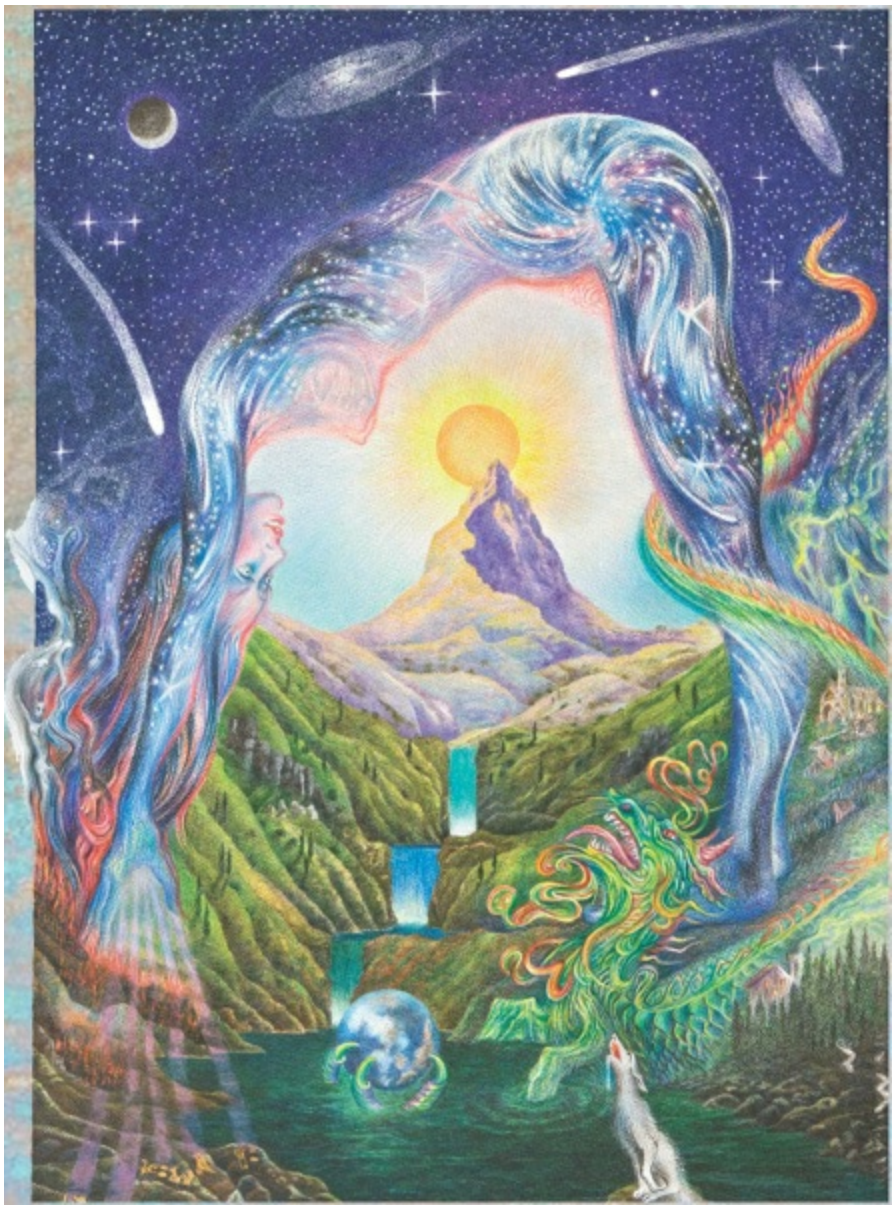

Plate 7. *The Night Journey*. The perennial search for transcendence.

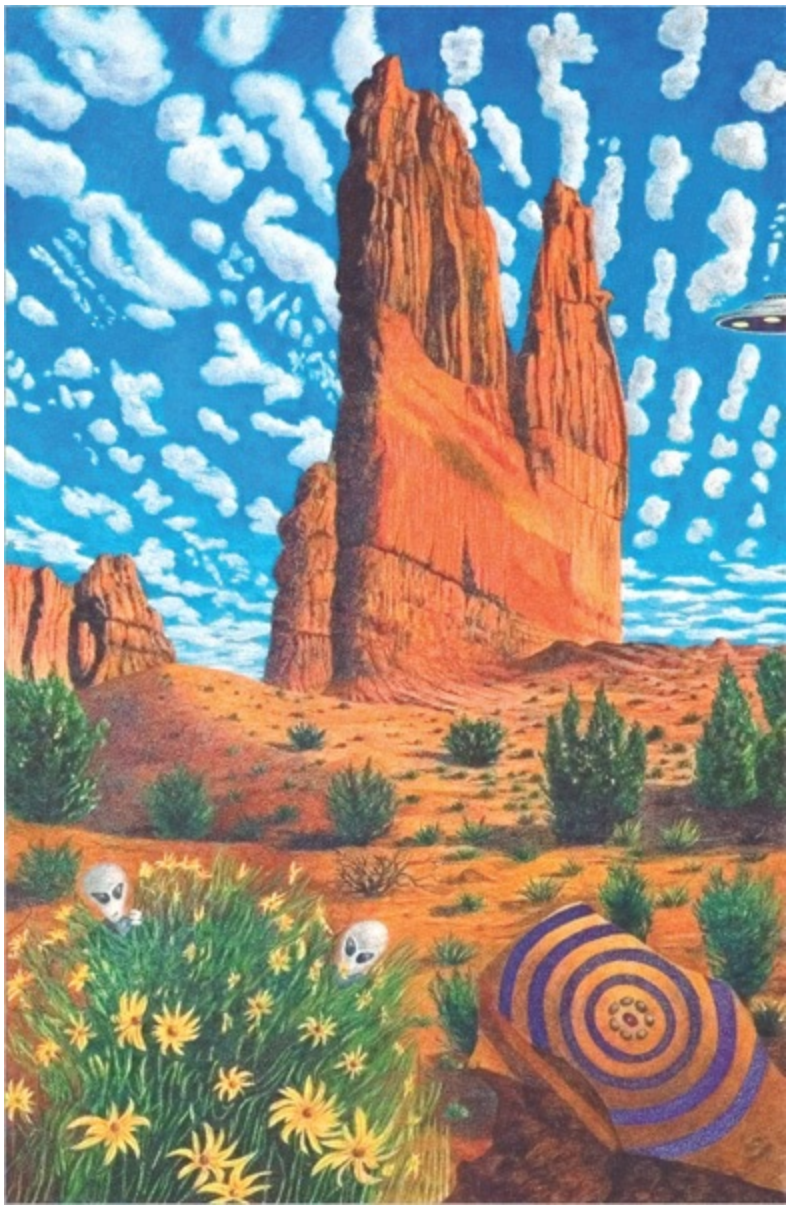

Plate 8. *Desert Flowering*. Extraterrestrials have angels, too.

16

Stranded in the Jungle

Living Primitively, the Lucifer Manifesto, Willful Blindness, Prison Worlds, and the Miracle of the Fish

Mein Host, as most of the others, had a fitful and uneasy rest that first night in Sisal.

The floor was hard and the small room oppressively hot. The open door seemed to gather the sound of the waves breaking on the beach, amplifying them into a constant roar as the noise bounced and boomed off the cement-block walls of the shack.

Almost everyone else had the same reaction: I didn't see one person who wasn't sleepily scratching at their mosquito bites and complaining. There was a weariness in the air as people folded their towels and blankets. They hadn't had a good meal since Mexico City, and hunger was clearly starting to take its toll.

After some aimless milling about in the two small rooms, with the dogs barking excitedly outside, anxious to be let free, four people were assigned to explore the village of Sisal to check whether there was any food they could buy.

The village turned out to be not much larger than the few shacks they'd been able to see in the headlights of the bus the previous night. Coconut palms—some set around the cottages while other trees spread back from the coast south of the village—lifted their swaying heads above the smaller trees until they, too, were swallowed by the jungle.

There was no restaurant or café, no shops or gas station, nothing but a short line of cottages with shallow pitched roofs, some roughly built of timber, and others, like the one they'd rented, crudely constructed of cement blocks. The one common denominator was that each shack was obviously dilapidated or in some state of advanced disrepair. Yet each one was

evidently occupied.

“I know these people must be terribly poor,” Paul said to John as they were walking through the village. They’d stopped outside a particularly ill-kept shack. “But, look. Look at that! You’d have thought they could at least have repaired those windowframes. Everything’s falling apart.”

Paul, you’ll remember, was one of the architects in the group—the one Mary Ann replaced with Mein Host when it came time to design the London mansion. He was an unusually sensitive man who hid his vulnerability under a rigid, somewhat Germanic, persona.

“You’re not taking this personally, are you?” John said with a quick bark of laughter. When he saw that Paul was not amused, the laughter became a cough.

“Of course you’re right, Paul. The place is a terrible mess. And it looks like it’s being kept that way deliberately. Perhaps they do it as a constant reminder of their oppression.”

“Could be a sort of upside-down Potemkin Village.” Paul was getting into the spirit. “Maybe they keep it all broken down to squeeze money out of the Mexican government.”

“Right! Then where did all the money go?” John said, looking around them. “Maybe they all live somewhere else.”

They walked on thoughtfully, following the dirt track as it led out of the village, parallel to the coast and off into the jungle. As many of those who’ve been British schoolboys do almost without thinking, they started casually kicking a coconut shell between them, John flipping it over to Paul before speaking again.

“Remember what Robert was reading back in the bus? About the Maya? All those rebellions?”

The shell flicked back and forth across the path, each kick throwing up a small cloud of dust that sparkled in the sunbeams cutting through the thick, green foliage.

“Isn’t this what people are reduced to doing when they feel they’ve been oppressed?” John asked rhetorically, flipping the shell back to Paul. “They stop caring, don’t they? They just let things go.”

The shell whisked back and forth a few times before Paul replied.

“It’s a strange thing to do—hard to identify with. Like cutting away the branch you’re sitting on.”

“I’ve heard of this once before.” John kept his foot on the shell while speaking. “A girl I knew was traveling with a small group in a van, driving across Australia from east to west with an Aboriginal guide. A large, powerful woman—this guide. One of the people agitating loudest for Aboriginal rights.”

A twitch of his foot sent the hairy brown shell pivoting across the road and into the jungle behind Paul. Both were laughing while Paul scrambled in the thick undergrowth for their ball.

“The Aboriginal woman was a terrific guide. My friend said she’d shown her the ‘song lines’ and even told her some secret ‘woman business’ on the trip. But apparently she was as fierce as she was large. My friend started counting how many cans of Coke she’d drink in a day—she got up to twenty-six, I think.”

With a quick jerk of his foot, Paul exacted his revenge by snapping the coconut shell back across the track, hitting his friend’s shin with a painful-sounding crack. Rubbing his leg, John threw his friend a mock-angry look, determined to finish his story about the Aboriginal woman.

“It wasn’t how much of the stuff she drank that got to my friend—it was what she did with the cans. Just chucked ’em out the window. Wherever they were. In the middle of a pristine desert, out went the cans.

“As I said, she was fierce—ferocious. My friend didn’t want to say anything—after all, it was the Aboriginals’ country! But after a few days of it, can after can, she broke down and blurted out the question: ‘How can you do that!? I’ve been watching you. How can you litter your country like that?’

“‘Ain’t my country!’ The Aborigine woman snapped back, chucking a couple more cans out the rear window. My friend? Well, she never brought that subject up again.”

John lapsed into silence after finishing his story. Looking back, he saw the other two who’d been exploring the other direction now returning to the village.

“That’s really sad.” Paul said as the pair turned back. “No, I mean it. I can see her point. I can feel her anger from here. But it just seems so crazy to me!

And what on earth does it accomplish? Just ruins it for everyone."

"You were right earlier, Paul. All these people have been stepped on for centuries. When was England last invaded—1066? We'll never be able to put ourselves in their shoes. If that's the only way left to them to express their fury at being an occupied people, then so be it."

"Well, we're going to be here for a while," John sighed. "So we're going to have to find some way of relating to them. They're obviously suspicious of us. We haven't seen one person all morning."

Paul and John caught up with the other two, and all four turned off the main track when they caught a glimpse of a small dirt path leading into the wilderness behind the village. The path petered out in a couple of hundred yards and disappeared into the green fog of the jungle.

They turned back toward the village when an old man seemed to materialize out of nowhere on the path in front of them. He was short and stocky, wearing a broad-brimmed hat and a poncho, and waving a staff as long as he was tall. His head was turned away from them, but I could see a creased, brown face in the shadow of his hat.

As they drew close to him they noticed that he was pointing at different trees and plants in the jungle with his staff. Coconuts, of course, they recognized, but they had no idea what those ugly red things were that the old man was making such a fuss about.

Before the man could stop him Paul reached forward to pick the fruit. Cupping his hand underneath it, Paul grasped the fruit firmly to pull it off. No one else noticed, but I could see that the old trickster was starting to chortle, then he was doubling over, his body shaking with laughter as Paul yanked back his hand with a shout of surprise and pain. Paul had the dusty-red fruit sitting in his palm, but it was surrounded by hundreds of tiny, almost transparent, spines sticking into the skin of his hand and halfway up his arm. He was soon grunting in pain and frustration as he tried to brush off the needlelike filaments with his other hand, only to find them sticking into that one, too.

"If we're meant to eat these things, they'd better be damn good!" Paul said with a grimace.

They looked around for the old man, curious and evidently a little irritated

that he hadn’t warned them about the spines, but he had vanished back into the jungle.

When the four returned to report on their findings, to the horror of some, they were carrying no food. There were groans all around when the scouts explained that there was not a scrap of food in the village. No food and no people.

“There was this one little old man we met on the way back . . . we think he was trying to help.” John spoke loudly over the general grumbling. “Strange thing was, we didn’t ask him about food. He just seemed to pick it up, because he was pointing this staff of his at the coconut trees and making a chopping action with his hand.”

He explained how the old man also pointed to a dense tangle of what they later learned was a prickly pear cactus. These were the bulbous, reddish-colored fruit they’d all seen growing wild by the roadside. The fruit, each the size of a child’s fist, appeared to grow off the edges of the fat, green leaves of the cactus and hadn’t looked at all appetizing. Not only did they think the fruit was weird-looking but the leaves were spotted with the most vicious-looking stiff spines, each one ending in a needle point. But that hadn’t turned out to be the worst of it.

“The old man made some cutting gestures with his hands. Then he pointed at the prickly pears with this staff of his while he made eating noises. That bit we understood. The pears were something we could eat.” John paused and looked around. “Then we made our mistake. Tell you about that in a moment. Anyway, we waited ’til the old man had wandered off and then we managed to pick a few.” He passed around a canvas bag in which lay half a dozen prickly pears at the bottom.

“But don’t touch them!” John said sharply when he saw Juliette reaching her hand into the bag. “Take your hand out. Really, I mean it. Don’t make the same mistake Paul made!”

Juliette looked momentarily startled and pulled her hand out with a jerk.

“Go on, Paul, show them your hand. Show them what happened.”

Paul was clearly embarrassed as he slowly held out his left hand. He was a tall, upright man, who, like Robert, had done his spell in the army prior to joining the community. He’d completed his architectural studies at the same

college as Mein Host, and they'd become as good friends as Paul's laid-back nature could sustain. Somewhat stern in mien, Paul carried himself with a natural dignity, and he obviously didn't enjoy being held up to some well-meaning joshing.

The teasing quickly stopped as people looked more carefully at Paul's extended hand. His palm still appeared covered in a white fuzz, and the flesh, where it could be seen, was already turning a deep red.

"Look carefully and be warned." John cut in to the curious silence. "See? Those white things . . . they're almost invisible. Each of those is a tiny, hairlike, vicious little spine. Hundreds of those things . . ."

Paul continued, "I just tried to pluck one and look what happened. They must have tiny little hooks on the end of them, because they're hell to get out. And the spines are so fine I gave up trying. I'm going to need some tweezers and a magnifying glass to pull 'em out."

"They're not poisonous, are they?" asked Juliette, as she fished in her bag for her tweezers. "Do they hurt? Are you okay?"

"I don't think so . . . they're a damn nuisance, though. I tried pulling them out one by one, but it just made it worse. Then I had 'em in my other hand, too!"

"How did you actually pick them?" Mein Host was peering into the bag.

"Very, very carefully!" Paul said to some nervous laughter.

"After Paul had his accident, believe me, we were a lot more careful! You can bash the fruit off with a stick—they're pretty tough. Then, when you pick up the pears, use one of those flat, shiny leaves, the ones like plastic—they're all over. Double it over a couple of times and use that to pick 'em up. Then those tiny spines won't get you."

"And the old man? What happened to him?" asked a voice from the back of the room.

"The old man?" Paul smiled ruefully. "He's probably still laughing his head off at those poor, ignorant gringos! He was probably trying to warn us."

\# \# \#

The human propensity for belligerence and cunning wasn't very different 75,000 years ago from what you see around you today.

Humans tend to pride themselves on the steady progress of the species. Space travel, nuclear power, and the Internet are among those advances held up to prove contemporary superiority over whatever may have come before.

Recorded human history stretches back a mere few thousand years to Sumeria and Egypt. Prior to about eight thousand years ago, almost nothing is actually known about the everyday lives of people. Glimpses can be gained from the few ruins that remain, but any generalization as to how people of those eras thought and felt has to be, of necessity, speculation and guesswork.

While modern archaeological discoveries continue to push the date of known human habitation further back into the mists of prehistory, almost nothing has been found predating twenty thousand years past. Gold artifacts, made from the most stable of elements, can only be dated back some eight thousand to ten thousand years, and the so-called Bronze Age started taking off on the Indian subcontinent a mere five or six thousand years ago.

Time will always be the enemy of preservation.

Under normal physical conditions, metals corrode or oxidize, stone cracks and weathers, crystal is fragile, precious stones get endlessly recut or reset, bones crumble, buildings turn to dust, and good ideas fall prey to social disruptions. Little to nothing remains of the distant times I am describing here—perhaps some hints of cities long under water, feats of geomancy so enormous as to be invisible to the modern eye, or a couple of mysterious mounds deep in the South American jungle. The cave paintings of Lascaux in southwestern France are believed to be a mere seventeen thousand years old.

Only when the midwayers reveal their hidden caches of the world’s most ancient and beautiful objects—their Treasure of El Dorado—will the remaining skeptics finally be persuaded of the deep and far-reaching heritage of your species.

Until such a time, the only inheritance from those antediluvian times is psychosocial rather than material. The constant reiteration of reactive thought and behavior patterns—like irresponsibility or blame, for example—repeated endlessly down through the history of the species have imprinted the world mind in such a way as to make independent thought, or action, all that more challenging.

Caligastia, for all his brilliance, had sorely underestimated the native cunning

of those working in the temple laboratories and manufacturing facilities in his widespread empire. The Prince's policy of carefully sowing seeds of dissension among the different kingdoms within his sphere of influence had been more effective than even he had hoped. Technological development, with a stress on weaponry, was proceeding apace.

Considering himself liberated from any of the traditional constraints placed on his original mission by MA, Caligastia had no compunction about passing along what he knew about the science of physics. He'd also been encouraging his midwayers since the uprising to make a particular study of the atomic structure of matter, again with a focus on the practical application of the research to weapons development.

This had required painstaking supervision on the Prince's part, because he had no wish for his plans to go up in smoke prematurely, quite literally, before he'd accomplished his aim of annihilating Vanu and his associates.

Caligastia had to keep this, his true motive, a secret from all but his closest associates. Even those midwayers not intimately concerned with weapons development were kept well out of the loop. This had not sat well with any of the midwayers, who liked to think of themselves as one large family when it suited them. As quasi-siblings, Caligastia's midwayers fought among themselves; they were constantly attempting to outwit one another to prove their dominance and were mischievous enough to follow their chief 's instructions only when it suited them. But trying to get them to keep secrets from one another appeared to push them over the edge.

There followed a brief rebellion—actually, more of a sit-down strike—in which the midwayers refused to follow any more instructions from the Prince until information was allowed to flow freely between them. When Caligastia refused to modify his position, the strike continued unabated for more than a hundred years.

As it turned out, this standoff worked more to the advantage of the midwayers than the Prince. While he was preoccupied with trying to settle the strike, which included talking to all the midwayers individually—all 40,119 of them—they were able to continue their secret work without his knowledge or interference. During this period, both sides in the impending conflict made rapid and unanticipated (at least by Caligastia) leaps of progress. I don't think the Prince had realized just how devious the priest-

scientists in the two dominant powers had become under midwayer tutelage. More interesting to me, I believe this was the first time I saw a real divide developing between the rebel midwayers and Caligastia.

The Prince's relationship with his midwayers after the death of their parents—the sixty staff who'd followed the Prince into rebellion—had always been strained. He'd permitted them the freedom to work actively behind the scenes on behalf of their preferred warrior-kings and relied on them to keep him informed about their technological progress. He was too proud to think that his midwayers would ever deceive him.

But, of course, they did.

It's my observation that Prince Caligastia found himself trapped within a philosophical dilemma. He was, by nature, an autocrat. By this time, he was convinced that he was a god. He believed that his was the final word on all that was happening on the planet, and, working through his midwayers and their priests, he was determined to make every single person believe this. He spoke of personal freedom, and yet he'd had to keep his midwayers on a short leash for as long as possible.

And herein lay the problem.

One of the central tenets of Lucifer's Manifesto was a plea for more personal freedom, and Caligastia certainly believed himself free to do whatever he wanted. Yet the autocratic nature of his personality did not allow him to truly extend this freedom to others.

This was not what the midwayers had signed up for. That very freedom, the liberation to become more than the functional beings they knew themselves to be, had convinced many of them to follow Lucifer and Caligastia into rebellion.

So the midwayers supporting the two dominant powers started to collude prematurely with their priest-scientists—without keeping the Prince informed about what they were up to. They pushed ahead far further and faster than Caligastia's agenda allowed.

Both sides had learned something about the secrets of nuclear fission at around the same time. From that moment on, working in their secret underground laboratories, progress had been moving along rapidly. Both sides had even discovered deposits of uranium within a few weeks of each

other—which made me suspect that someone was spying on someone else.

Miners in the Northern Kingdom had stumbled on uranium oxide in their silver mines in southern Europe. Their opposition, now an empire stretching across Africa to its western limits, had located—with invaluable midwayer help—the massive uranium ore deposits in Gabon. The yellowcake was simple to prepare in situ in both situations, and it was then sent on to their central laboratories for further refining.

I should emphasize that none of this activity would have taken place under normal evolutionary conditions if it had not been for the angelic rebellion. I've come to believe that it was far too early in the natural development of the human species to be trusted with handling the devastating power of nuclear fission. Scientific progress and emotional and spiritual maturity need to develop hand in hand if a technologically advanced civilization is going to survive.

Mortals in all inhabited worlds are widely known for their curiosity. Born onto planets at many different degrees of social, moral, and scientific advancement, all mortals look out into the same vast and star-filled universe and wonder who—or what—is out there.

Some planetary civilizations approach this challenge through technological means; others, like your cetaceans, choose to venture off their home planets using the innate power of their minds. These latter species are generally considered to be more spiritually and mentally developed than those who rely solely on their technology—however advanced their machines. And there are some planets that had originally developed sophisticated technologies and then relinquished them, either because they saw the potential dangers looming or because of some devastating conflict from which they learned to place their priorities elsewhere.

From this it should be evident that without the appropriate data passed initially from Caligastia to the midwayers, humans of the time would have had no idea what uranium ore was, or how it might be used in such destructive ways. So the pattern of using nuclear fission for weapons rather than for peaceful purposes, which we've seen reflected in the recent cold war, can be traced directly back to Caligastia's drive for supreme power.

I'm no scientist, so I can't report on the many details involved in developing and preparing these frightful weapons and their delivery systems.

What I can say is that it took about seventy years for the priest-scientists to move from yellowcake uranium through all the refining processes to an ingenious adaptation that used a fission-fusion-fission principle to create what would now be known as a hydrogen bomb.

By this time the situation in the laboratories of both kingdoms had spun way out of Caligastia's control. He hadn't figured on the depth of ferocity of the human animal and the degree to which priests on both sides had been successful at demonizing the opposing kingdom.

I'd seen a number of minor conflicts that would blow up every once in a while during the time I've been observing this world, but from the level of hostility I sensed radiating from both kingdoms and the information I gleaned from some of my colleagues, I was sure it would only end in a disaster of calamitous proportions.

Perhaps I ought to have stayed and observed the tragedy unfold, to have taken in the true awfulness of a war that laid waste much of northern Africa and the Middle East. This would be a war, I knew, that would be seen as a direct result of the rebellion and all the abuses of power that had followed.

I wonder sometimes whether I might have come to terms sooner with my responsibility for supporting Lucifer's uprising had I stayed around for the conflict. But I was frightened—scared out of my wits—and you know by now how fragile an angel's emotional body is. I felt compelled to follow my overwhelming feeling of wanting to turn my back on the impending carnage. I can see now that I was utterly terrified to observe the consequences of our secession manifesting with such implacable ferocity of the war I knew was to come.

As I've previously explained with respect to an angel's underdeveloped emotional body, those of my order are particularly tender by nature. The mindless violence we observe playing out daily in your world is rendered ten times more painful to watch by our empathic natures. If, for example, I observe a crime or an abuse of power happening between humans, I have no choice but to experience what each of the protagonists are feeling—the fear and the fury.

Perhaps you can understand why I'd want to avoid witnessing death and suffering on a scale that I wasn't sure my sanity could survive. I'm not saying this to excuse myself but to understand with the wisdom of retrospect exactly

what drove me to make my decisions in those terrible times. By understanding and accepting the errors I've made, I can learn from them and hope to redeem myself.

These were not my thoughts at the time. I could see what was coming, and I'd become convinced by then that matters had spiraled way out of the control of both Caligastia and the midwayers. Others in Caligastia's circle were blind to this imminent catastrophe, as was demonstrated by the speed at which my transfer came through. I'd put in a formal request to be transported to Zandana, convincing myself that it had been a long time since I'd last been there and I was anxious to see their progress.

Within a few days, with my permit in hand (and, yes, angels do have hands!), I was on my way back to Zandana, hoping beyond hope they, too, hadn't descended into such conflict and chaos.

* * *

The midsummer sun on the Yucatán Peninsula was as brutal as anything the group had experienced in Nassau. However, happily for them, here the heat was mitigated slightly by the closeness of the ocean. This made little difference to the temperature in the hut: the tropical sun heated the corrugated metal roofing to such an extent that drops of water from a brief afternoon rainfall evaporated immediately on contact with the roof in a little puff of steam.

The lack of food in the village and the apparent absence of villagers, puzzling though they were, left the community to fend for itself. Coconuts, the easiest food to gather because they frequently lay under the trees untouched, started to accumulate in a pile beside two of the men busy slicing them open with the machetes they'd fortuitously bought in Mérida. One small group traipsed south along the beach in hopes of finding some fishermen.

The dogs ran around barking and growling, playing games among themselves with the discarded coconut shells. No one took any notice of them.

Mein Host was among a few others who were determined to master the tricky art of prickly-pear picking, as well as keeping their eyes open for anything else that looked vaguely edible.

He and Eddy set off into the jungle north of the village, walking parallel to

the beach. They soon found a clump of prickly pears, well protected behind a jumble of vicious-looking spines. It was quickly obvious that Eddy hadn't paid much attention to the earlier lecture, because in his excitement at having come across the bush so quickly—they were later to find prickly pear cacti were ubiquitous thereabouts—that he plunged his hand unthinkingly into the depth of the plant. Fortunately for him, he jerked his hand out before trying to grasp the pear, thus avoiding the worst of the damage.

Mein Host doubled over in laughter at this. Yet when he saw Eddy's genuine distress and surprise (it turned out the man wasn't at the meeting earlier at which Paul showed his reddened, furry hand), my ward had to choke back his laughter. Without straightening up, he went on poking about in the undergrowth for the right leaves to use to avoid injury. If he'd been able to hear me then, as he can now, I would have told him to look more closely in the immediate vicinity of the prickly pear cactus itself—because that was where he'd find the fat green leaves he was looking for.

Eddy, still nursing his hand and struggling in vain to pull the spines out with his teeth, found the appropriate shiny, green leaves poking out from under that very cactus. He called Mein Host back from where he was digging around in the undergrowth, and between them they doubled over the leaves a few times and were able to pick all seven pears they could reach without adding to the spines already impaling Eddy's hand.

Soon they got the knack of rolling the prickly pears between a wide, flat stone and the sandy floor of the jungle. This grinding action removed the most vicious of the tiny spines projecting from the surface of the fruit "like the hairs on the moles on the chin of a witch," Eddy summarized them in his singsong, Scottish brogue.

Moving along farther into the jungle, the pair were able to collect more than a score more fruit and polished off the spines before taking them back. Others, too, brought their prickly-pear offerings to the group. Most of them arrived without having ground off the spines and as a consequence were now sitting around outside the hut helping one another to pull the spines out of their hands.

It took the rest of the afternoon to peel all the pears to get at the somewhat unrewarding little pieces of pink fruit buried within them. Next to the peelers, the collected coconuts were being spiked and the milk drained off to be drunk

later. Taking it in turns, a couple of the men used the only two machetes owned by the group (they came singularly unprepared) to split open the coconuts. These they then passed along to Juliette and three others who worked with pocket knives to cut out the meat.

It was a simple meal when they finally settled down together. A few chocolate bars—I noticed a good-size slab of Cadbury Fruit & Nut Bar, much valued as a balanced sustenance by English students—along with some apples drawn from the bottom of knapsacks. The chocolate was split up and carefully divided before being passed around after the coconut and prickly pears were finished.

Gathering for their simple meal, the group buzzed with excitement as people sat in twos and threes on the sandy ground in front of their shack, their fingers soon stained red from the pear juice, which in turn colored the white chunks of coconut meat on which they were gnawing.

“Odd, isn’t it?” Mein Host was saying to Juliette as they chewed their pieces of coconut with their backs against the trunk of a palm tree. “Look around, it’s like we’re on a camping trip.”

“Right!” said Juliette dryly. “A camping trip! Rather than being deposited in a tiny village—a village remarkably free of villagers, no less—in the middle of nowhere. No money. No food. No prospects. No way out. . . .” Her voice died away as she must have realized that what she started as a joke had suddenly become all too serious. They really were stranded.

Mein Host must have picked up on her tone: “Yeah, I know there’s a bit of nervousness, but there’s so much real excitement in the air, too, isn’t there? Can you feel it? We really are on the edge of a precipice.” He got to his feet while he was talking so I believe he missed the flash of terror that crossed Juliette’s normally placid features. He was fond of Juliette, but I’d seen him become irritated at how she’d slip so easily into fearful self-concern.

Perhaps it was the sacred dictum of personal responsibility that had been drummed into them by Robert’s teachings and Mary Ann’s sharp tongue, perhaps it was a relapse into his hard and cynical persona, but had Mein Host been more aware of Juliette’s former life, he would have been more sensitive to her concerns.

He might also have understood, even at that early stage, how little any of

them really knew about the others, unless they'd been close friends before joining the community. It was as if each of them, in their own way, had become so focused on their own spiritual and psychic transformation that their lives before the Process had become increasingly irrelevant. While they often knew the most intimate details about each other's inner lives, they mostly had no idea of anyone's actual background. Mein Host had a general sense that Juliette had grown up and qualified as an architect in South Africa but never took the next step to realize that it would have been during apartheid and the impact that apartheid must have had on her.

But, of course, it did have an impact. More than he could have imagined.

Juliette was a tragic example of some of the hidden fallout from apartheid. The terrible damage that segregation inflicted on the black South African consciousness, for obvious reasons, is better understood; yet perhaps more difficult to acknowledge is the harm wreaked on the children who grew up within the dominant white community.

A girl was born into a prosperous middle-class white family. She grew up sufficiently intelligent and self-disciplined to become an architect. But she lived in a bubble of ignorance, all but unaware of the appalling inequity of the social system that supported her and her family in such pleasant luxury.

Had Mein Host asked her, she would have claimed—as so many others did—how well her family treated their black servants and how appreciated the family felt in return. She would perhaps have talked about the elegant white houses up in the mountains, their beautifully manicured gardens with all their (black) gardeners; how easy life was when there was always someone (black) to get you a drink or make your bed; how special it felt to be driven around in a big car by a (black) chauffeur; or how her school was so progressive because there were no slow (black) students to hold them back.

I said earlier that Juliette was "all but unaware of the appalling inequity" of apartheid, because as a sensitive woman, she would have had to have been conscious, on some level, of what was going on around her in the country. The truth of this emerged when she completed her training and found that she had a powerful inner drive to get out of South Africa. To her concerned parents, she explained that the move to London was to further her career in a bigger and richer milieu. But on a deeper level, she admitted later, she must

have been feeling a growing discomfort with the South African regime.

Juliette could be seen as a poster girl for someone who grows up in a culture in which a small but dominant group viciously suppresses a much larger segment of the population, based solely on race.

It was only when she arrived in London and started working in an architect's office that the full horror and injustice of apartheid, seen suddenly from the outside, struck home so deeply that she never really fully recovered.

I learned all this from communicating with one of Juliette's angels.

Apparently, Juliette had been filled with guilt and remorse—emotions she was quite incapable of expressing outwardly, let alone of releasing. She couldn't even talk about it to the people in her office, so she started shriveling into herself. It was only when she first encountered Mary Ann and the community back in London and started having E-meter sessions that she was able to speak more openly.

I wasn't privy to Juliette's sessions, but it was obvious to me that they hadn't been all that effective because she remained withdrawn and placid to the point of passive-aggression. Yet, in a large and noisy community, Juliette's quiet nature drew Mein Host to befriend her. Their one unsuccessful night together in London, before the group ever gathered into a community, was never repeated, but I noticed it had allowed them a certain unspoken closeness.

The evening of the first day for the community in Sisal, with the sun low over the water, its glowing reflection dancing toward the beach and edging the waves in gold was breathtakingly beautiful to those watching from the dunes. Thin strips of multihued clouds lay just above the horizon, so the ocean appeared to be trimmed in a rainbow haze.

In their twos and threes, as though possessed by ondines, they started throwing off their clothes and running shouting with joy over the dunes and down the small cliff, running and jumping and flinging their arms up as they plunged into the warm waters of the Gulf. Mein Host was among the first of these momentarily free souls, now ducking and diving through the waves and heading out into the blood-red sea.

At that point, a shoal of flying fish crossed their path, flashing through the air low over their heads and glinting in the sun like little silver missiles.

These were bewitching moments, as though miracle were being piled upon miracle, as Mein Host commented later.

Their shouts of happiness must have been heard by those in the shack, because soon almost everybody was splashing into the surf.

Almost everybody?

Mein Host—and several of the others—noticed that Mary Ann and Robert were the only ones not in the water with them. Everyone else—the whole community—were laughing and shouting as they bobbed in the warm water or played in the surf like children.

The dogs, having run up and down the beach barking furiously as they watched their owners disappearing into the waves, finally flung themselves into the water. Some paddled determinedly toward their owners, while others swam in small circles, their excited barking adding to the general cacophony.

Ishmael, the third of Mary Ann and Robert's three dogs, having no owner in the water, appeared to be entertaining himself by biting the waves as they rolled in. Ishmael, who we will be hearing more about in the future, was one thoroughly unusual dog. Perhaps the other owners might dispute it, but Ishmael was the most individualistic, and by far the most intelligent, German shepherd of the pack. And this remained true as the pack expanded over the years. His caramel and cream coloring was well balanced but nothing out of the ordinary for a German shepherd. What set him apart was a delicately formed diamond of umber-colored fur right in the middle of his brow, almost as if the dog had an activated third eye.

"Ishmael's a strange case, isn't he?" Mein Host commented to Juliette as they stood up to their necks in water, watching Ishmael snapping and snarling at the waves. "He's almost too intelligent for a dog. It's kind of unfair, isn't it? He's always got this quizzical look on his face, have you noticed?"

"As if he almost understands what's going on in the human world," Juliette was saying as a wave broke over her head. Confident in the water, she bobbed back up to the surface again and continued without missing a beat. "But never quite intelligent enough to make any sense of it."

They were both laughing now when Mein Host added, "And he goes on and on, desperately trying to understand."

"Just like us!" she said, playfully splashing Mein Host in the face.

# # #

The very moment I stepped out of the embrace of the transport seraphim, the psychic atmosphere on the planet of Zandana surprised me by how profoundly different it was from Earth. To begin with, I wondered if it was because Earth had become so much worse, or that Zandana had made so much more progress in comparison. Venturing out into the city on the southern continent, it soon became evident it was the latter.

The city was magnificent. When I thought of Caligastia's city back on Earth falling into ruin and then sinking beneath the waves of the Persian Gulf, the contrast was almost too vivid to bear. I'd hoped to get away from all thoughts of Earth when I came to Zandana this time. Yet the wide, tree-lined avenues; the soft, molded forms of the buildings and the way the radial thoroughfares gathered into a great central plaza dominated by a majestic temple; the quiet discipline of the people I saw moving around in the government buildings; the cleanliness of the place; the sudden laughter from a group of women washing clothes together beside a canal, their children playing in a nearby park—all this and more plunged me into a deep depression. It wasn't the distraction I'd hoped for at all. I felt sad and distraught rather than happy.

Seeing this disparity and imagining what Caligastia's Earth could have been, in spite of the rebellion, first brought home to me the terrible damage being inflicted back on my home planet. While I was there, in spite of the Prince's covert machinations, I always felt perhaps he would change, or that circumstances might force him to see the damage he was causing, or even that he might be able to create a lasting peace, if only, if only . . .

But, of course, that hadn't happened. It was never Caligastia's agenda. I can see that now. He'd always been out for himself—his own power, his own self-aggrandizement. All the signs had been there—his emphasis on individuality, his pride, and his overweening ambition. I'd seen them all in flashes, in moments of extreme tension, but I didn't want to believe these qualities would actually turn out to be so deeply entrenched in his character.

As with both Lucifer and Satan, Caligastia was a powerful and brilliant being. Along with so many of my peers, I simply could not believe that these glorious Descending Sons (to use MA's own terms) could be so misguided. Surely, they must know what they are talking about. I'd seen enough of

bureaucratic incompetence and lethargy in MA's local headquarters to want something new and different. And I liked the idea of more freedom for everybody. But until I arrived on Zandana on this particular occasion, I had no idea of how far we on Earth had strayed from our dreams and the promises we'd made to ourselves for better lives.

I'd never felt this intensity of sadness and self-recrimination before. An angel's consciousness is normally a study in equanimity. We just get on with our business and watch mortals wrestling with emotions and feelings we'll never get to experience with a mix of poignancy and bemused horror. The point is we're not structurally equipped for strong emotions, because our function is to simply observe and guide (when we're required to do so) and not to make judgments.

I was only starting to realize what I know now so well—that as a Watcher I was experiencing these almost overpowering emotions. Prior to the rebellion, I was as emotionally detached as the next angel. Frankly, this wasn't something I'd expected.

Naturally, there are those whose function it is to make judgments, but they are of an entirely different order of beings. They have to be emotionally and mentally flexible enough to identify with those they're required to judge; otherwise, they would have no reasonable foundation upon which to base their judgments. At the same time, these angels are required to be detached from preconceptions and any bias due to overidentification with the judged. I am not one of those eminent beings.

So here I was, weighed down with bewildering feelings of my guilt and shame, which only seemed to get worse the more I saw of Zandana's progress. I started to become immobilized. Fear for myself, for my own future, horrible self-doubt—emotions I'd never experienced before—were piling on top of the intensity of my self-recrimination. Ashamed, and with a bowed head, I dragged myself from the city to one of the vast primeval forests that the citizens of Zandana wisely hadn't plundered. I wasn't sure why I did this—it was as if I were being guided in some way I didn't understand. I was on another planet I still knew little about. So I went with the flow. I allowed myself in my dejection to be blown by the etheric wind of the Spirit to the very center of the forest.

Trees, massively tall and purple-leafed, loomed over me. Their trunks were

so solidly compacted I could actually feel a change in temperature as I moved through them. The beams from one of Zandana's suns shone through the leaves, slashes of golden light cutting through the rose-violet haze that hung suspended in clouds as dense as plasma in the forest glades below. Birds as small as hummingbirds dipped and flew around the trumpeting mouths of hot-pink blossoms, their plumage exploding with color whenever they flashed through a sunbeam.

When I saw the shadow of a large passenger bird circling high above the canopy flickering over the long grass of meadow, I lay down on my back and gazed upward, letting the chiaroscuro of its massive wings play over my closed eyelids, as the fandor momentarily obscured the sun.

A peace that I hadn't experienced in over a quarter of a million years fell over me.

I've no concept how long I lay there; the shorter day-and-night cycle of Zandana seemed to strobe endlessly on, so it might have been days or years before I rallied myself. Then I chose the most regal of the trees in the grove within which I'd originally felt myself gently deposited and allowed its powerful devic energy to suffuse my being. I'd never done this before—never had to. So, once again, I found myself curious as to where this impulse came from.

I won't trouble you, patient reader, with all I went through in the 123 short Zandana days I stayed in the forest grove recovering my emotional and psychic balance. It may well become evident in a changing tone of my narrative. Suffice it to say that I saw no one in all that time, mortal or celestial, and was left completely undisturbed. This blessing of peace allowed me to review the rebellion and its consequences more objectively, at least on the two planets I was coming to know best. I had no reason to believe that the situation was any better in the other thirty-five worlds from what I'd managed to pick up on the celestial circuits still available to me.

I had to acknowledge the wisdom of MA. I'd seen the chaos and violence of Lucifer and Caligastia's alternative. I'd observed the fear and suffering of too many mortals to believe that there was any validity left in the rebel cause. I'd been deeply disturbed by the indifference, shading into cruelty, that the undying showed to mortal death. Humans had become mere pawns in Caligastia's nefarious schemes. Perhaps some good will be extracted from

chaos, as the Melchizedek Brothers currently teach, but for the very life of me as I sat there I couldn't see anything positive about the rebellion and its frightful aftermath.

Even on Zandana, I knew of the bitter hostility that existed between the progressive society on this, the southern continent, and the vast majority of the population of the planet who eked out their existence on the other islands.

Xenophobia ran rampant on all the island nations, and although the more advanced southern nations should have known better, they remained deeply suspicious of all those they called barbarians. In many ways the affluence and progress I'd seen here came at the expense of those other poor people. This was not in the crude manner of stolen raw materials—the southern continent was remarkably self-sufficient—but in the more nuanced sense of stolen subtle energy.

This will take some explanation, because the concept will likely be foreign to the modern mind.

I ask you to visualize a whirlpool swirling around in a deep and fast-running river. For various reasons—a particular confluence of currents, the contours of the riverbed, the placement of underwater boulders—a whirlpool will occur at that particular spot. Now, compared to the flow of the river, the whirlpool represents a tremendous gathering of concentrated energy focused in that one place.

So it is in the more subtle realmss of the world mind. Periods of sudden enlightenment, or of artistic or technological progress, will appear to spring up spontaneously somewhere on the planet. You saw it in your world occurring at the summit of Greek culture, for example; or in the poetry and mathematics that emerged at the height of the Islamic civilization; or again in the European Renaissance; when, for reasons often appreciated only after the event, a particular place and time become the locus of much of the creative brilliance and intelligence available in the world mind.

It can work conversely, too, as with an Attila the Hun, or Pol Pot's Cambodia, or Hitler's Nazi Germany, in which the status quo is violently upended by a sudden explosion of collective madness.

On Zandana, however, due to the isolated physical distribution of the island nations, as well as the choice their Prince made to primarily develop

the southern continent, this whirlpool of creative genius seemed to have settled periodically over the more progressive southerners. Granted, they, too, had gone through their umpteen rulers and kings—their thousands of years of dictators, abortive republics, and communal states. Yet unlike Earth, there appeared to have been a steady and unbroken line of progress far more similar, I would imagine, to the development of a normal planet not suffering from the fallout of an angelic uprising.

If there is an overriding logic to the timing and placement of these massive infusions of creative energy, then I assume it is in the hands of the supermaterial planetary Over-government.

All inhabited planets, whether subject to the rebellion or not, possess these general administrative councils drawn from former inhabitants of that planet and led by a celestial resident Governor General. We are told that in isolated worlds, like Earth and Zandana, the Governor General stands in for the Planetary Prince in all supermaterial and Local Universe matters. But, significantly, although the governors are rotated every century, they possess "no actual personal authority in the management of world affairs," to use MA's words. They only act as coordinators of the seraphic administration, and in normal worlds, for example, all orders of angels functioning on the planet report to the Governor General as their director.

It should come as no surprise then to learn that I was shunned by this level of the celestial hierarchy, even as I preferred to keep my distance from them. Sometimes contact was unavoidable as when, for example, I needed to obtain leave to travel to Zandana and to make the necessary arrangements for a transport seraphim.

These necessary encounters were invariably cold and curt, and I'd get shuffled through the interview as fast as possible—as if I exuded a communicable form of rebellious insanity.

I've no wish to complain and merely state this as an observation: all of us who aligned ourselves with Lucifer's Manifesto were treated as traitors by MA's officials and those who remained loyal to MA. They had to tolerate us because, rebellion or not, the thirty-seven succeeding planets still fell broadly under their administrative control. But they made no secret of their distaste for us.

I wasn't able to observe this firsthand, unless my memory has been wiped

out, but I've heard from more than one colleague that not one of MA's loyal angels ever visited the realms of the imprisoned fallen angels.

Perhaps I haven't mentioned this, but immediately after the rebellion started in the Local Universe Headquarters world and each of us was compelled to make our choice, the dissenting angels were said to have been spirited away to prison worlds. These were the worlds all those loyal angels were so reluctant to visit.

Now this is where it gets personally intriguing!

I confidently stated above that "the dissenting angels were spirited away to prison worlds" because this was what MA has caused to be written by the Chief of Planetary Seraphim in the official version of the Lucifer uprising.

And yet here I am, posted to Earth for as long as I can recall.

Was I included in this friendless imprisonment and yet have no memory of it? Was I left on Earth by MA? If the authorities had some foresight as to how terrible the times to come would be under Caligastia's egregious rule, they might have thought Earth would be quite enough of a prison to leave me here.

I seem to have a continuous memory stretching back to before the Prince's mission, but I can't be sure there aren't gaping lacunae. If my memory were drawn down—such is the way secrets are kept between various levels of the celestial hierarchy when drama necessitates it—I ask myself, would I ever know? Or would I just pick up from where I left off before the amnesia?

I felt I was nearing the edge of understanding something desperately important with these thoughts, and it seemed curious to me that I would have to have been on Zandana to be entertaining them.

In much the same way, it comes to me as I am writing that I'm now using Mein Host's intuitive faculties and his nimble intelligence to consider these difficult matters in a deeper light.

This delights me!

When I started this project with Mein Host, we both had different but overlapping motives for taking it on. We'd agreed between us that it would have to be a labor of love; it needed to be truthful to both memory or intuition, and it would likely be far too personal to ever see the light of day.

Mein Host made it clear from the start that one of his reasons for taking on

the book was to get my viewpoint on some of the situations in his life that had seemed mysterious or unexplainable. An example you may recall from this long and winding narrative was his extraction by midwayers, along with his girlfriend Jennifer, from the impossibly small windows of a crashing and flattened CitroÃ«n Deux Chevaux.

My own compelling interest was to reexamine the recent history of Earth, starting half a million years ago when I first arrived here, as part of the Prince's mission. I lived through and observed most of that era, when I wasn't off-planet. Yet so much occurred that remained a mystery to me at the time, and is only now being made available through the creative alchemy I've been able to establish with my ward, that I'm being permitted to fill in some of the gaps in the official account.

This, I believe, is what we are accomplishing between us. Yet what I never really anticipated was that I'd be given the chance to explore more of my own origins and to understand so much of what has been previously hidden from me.

* * *

Halfway through the third day of roasting in the little shack, some of the weaker stomachs were starting to suffer when the first miracle happened. At least, that is how I heard it referred to as they sat around for the first decent dinner in five days. The "Miracle of the Fish," they called it, and I can't deny that it was mysterious and never seen again in all the time they lived on the coast.

Small fish had been caught by Mein Host's close friend Peter, who'd cleverly befriended a fisherman he'd met far down the beach, but there were too few fish to go around, and so were reserved for the Oracle and Teacher.

The miracle fish, however, was a fish of a very different order. First of all, it was remarkably large, perhaps four feet in length. Then again, it hadn't been caught by anyone. It washed up on the beach right outside the shack, as if delivered by some celestial FedEx. The most puzzling thing for those crowded around the fish as it lay in the surf was that it was perfectly fresh. It must have perished only moments earlier. How it died remained a mystery.

Although appreciably more modest, if compared to Jesus's Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes, the entire (somewhat smaller) multitude on the Yucatán

Peninsula appeared every bit as well fed and marveling at such a sign of their good fortune as the five thousand surrounding the Master.

They felt they were indeed being blessed by these Beings of theirs—whoever they might be.

Still nobody knew.

Mary Ann and Robert, however, had been probing deeper into this mystery and were starting to come up with some intriguing answers.

17

The Seraphic Transport System

True Visions, Electromagnetism, Aftermath of the War, Discovering Xtul, and the Sign of the Black Snake

The so-called Miracle of the Fish reinvigorated the community as a whole, as well as providing an excellent meal for everybody.

Through some sort of unspoken agreement, they hadn't gathered in one of their group meditations since they'd arrived in Sisal at midnight three days earlier. They'd been exhausted by the long trip, but their psyches had also been put through their paces.

"Are we really being guided?"

"Can this desolate village truly be our ultimate destination?"

"Is this what we gave up our lives in London for?"

"What do the Beings want from us?"

"We must be crazy following these voices when we don't even know who they are or where they come from."

"They've been right so far; we just have to trust them."

"If the Oracle trusts the Beings, then we should, too."

"How can we trust them? Look where we've ended up!"

So the conversations went on that third evening when they'd returned to the shack after their sunset splash in the warm gulf waters. I could see how Mein Host loved these moments—the sea, blood-red in the setting sun; the flying fish and pelicans whisking over the wave crests; the water clear, turquoise, and welcoming.

The encompassing warmth of the water, more than anything else, contrasted starkly with all my ward had left behind and disliked about England. Having been forced to learn to swim as an eight-year-old boy by being thrown in the deep end of a cold, leaf-strewn school swimming pool,

he’d never taken to the pleasures of the water. He fared little better on seaside trips to the English south coast, with its beaches not of soft sand but fraught with painful pebbles and the bleak, gray breakers grinding endlessly away on the shifting stones.

England is a cold, rainy island, surrounded by an even colder, grimmer, and invariably gray sea. Mein Host’s skinny, adolescent body, was no match for the freezing temperatures, and it trembled uncontrollably, no matter how active the lad was, within minutes of jumping in the water.

The warm, clear waters of the Caribbean had entirely changed his feelings about swimming in the ocean. It was a revelation to Mein Host. He could finally relax in the water, his body no longer shuddering with cold, and when he opened his eyes under water, he could see. He dived for the first time with joy. He learned to love swimming under water without a snorkel: he trained himself to stay down there for as long as three minutes.

So his evening splashes in the Gulf of Mexico quickly became a special time for him when he could swim off and be on his own, even if only for a few minutes. The Miracle of the Fish had touched him deeply, more deeply perhaps because of his newfound love of the sea.

“I feel Mother Ocean is supporting us,” he’d said to Juliette as they walked back to the hut. “She wants us to be here.”

Late that evening, the fish having been digested and the community feeling relaxed and more encouraged by the miracle, the Oracle called an 11 p.m. meeting that night for all of them to meditate together.

People had been clearing up, still talking loudly to one another. The so-called miracle had provoked a vigorous debate, because, unlike the equally mysterious Beings, the fish was undeniably real. In spite of the arguments to and fro on the nature of the miraculous, the skeptics being reduced finally to insisting it was all blind luck, the inescapable truth of it was that the fish was there.

“If that was just luck,” Mein Host called back to Canadian Dave, the prime skeptic, “then it was blind miraculous luck!”

Perhaps, had they known then that in all the months they spent on the Yucatán coast they would never see another fish of that size, or in that perfect a condition, the skeptics among them would have had to modify their

opinions.

When the meeting settled down, Mary Ann took over, announcing that they'd evidently reached the end of the line. To some nervous laughter, she looked around, seeking a smiling agreement that Sisal wasn't where the Beings intended them to end up any more than Mexico City or Mérida.

"So the questions at this point really are very simple," she was saying as the laughter died down. "First, which way should we go along the beach? That one is simple. Next will be: What will we find there? Some of you might get glimpses during the first question. Just write them down and keep quiet about them until we get to the second one, okay?"

There were a few moments of urgent whispering as those who had forgotten their notebooks gestured and hissed across the circle for friends to offer them writing materials from their backpacks. This was followed by some general scrambling for pens or pencils, while those thoughtful enough to have to come equipped looked on with superior smiles.

"Enough!" Mary Ann said with an edge in her voice. "Quiet, please." Her green eyes were flashing in the candlelight as she looked around again. "Here's the question then: Which way should we go? Do we turn left, southward; or right, northward toward Progreso? Okay? To the Beings, then: Which way will it be? Everybody, out!"

In the silence that followed, there was some scribbling within the first thirty seconds; then a further long silence interrupted periodically by the quick scratching of a pen. Toward the four-minute mark there were some more sounds of answers being written down, before Mary Ann called everyone back in.

Starting with Robert, sitting next to her, they went around the circle.

"Right," said Robert, "turn right up the beach."

"Right, northward," said the next.

"To the right," said the next, and the next, and the next . . .

This went on around the circle until they reached Vanessa. I noticed that everyone was listening expectantly.

"Turn left," she announced confidently, to an audible sigh from the others. "I'm going south along the beach!" Vanessa peered around, her look changing from tentative confidence to concerned embarrassment as person

after person announced their answer to consistently turn right, up the beach.

“Okay. Well, that’s pretty clear!” Mary Ann announced to some quickly stifled, knowing laughter.

“Next question: If we go to the right . . . what will we find?”

As before, some people appeared to write down what they heard from the Beings almost immediately, while others seemed to wait to the end of the designated time before recording their answer. Mein Host, I observed, was among the few who received their answers almost as soon as the question was asked.

Once again the Oracle called everyone back in and looked inquiringly at the person next to her, waiting for the first answer in the circle.

“I saw these high white walls . . .” the first person said.

“I could hear the sea,” said the next, “but I don’t think I could see it.”

“I saw a ladder leaning against a high wall.”

“It’s in a coconut grove, or very close to one.”

“It’s a kind of ruin, but there are buildings there.”

“It’s the place we’re being guided to . . .” This came from one of the more cautious members. It took courage to give the answer received truthfully, regardless of how much sense it made, because no one wished to be seen as wrong. This was clearly Vanessa’s dilemma.

“I’m not sure what I saw,” she said when it came to her turn, “but it didn’t look like much fun to me.”

The answers continued to come.

“It’s set back from a dirt track.”

“I saw a large meadow with coconut trees in the distance.”

When it came to Mein Host, he announced confidently: “I got that it’s the end of the road. A large place that we’ll get for nothing.”

“It’s going to be like a hot Shangri-La!” said Dave, not altogether seriously.

So it went, one or two people drawing a blank. Everybody else received a piece of the puzzle, while no one was given a complete vision. This would start to make more sense the very next day.

❖ ❖ ❖

I had intended to stay on Zandana for as long as possible, justifying it to myself as making a detailed analytic study of the comparable social and political systems on the two planets I knew best. I thought it might have been of use when the time came to examine some of the effects of the rebellion. That was my plan, anyway.

Yet my days on Zandana put an end to that idea. Beneath my rationalizations I realized lay a moral and spiritual cowardice. I didn't belong here. Staying here was an easy way of avoiding the chaos and bloodshed I knew had been breaking out on my home planet. I'd chosen to follow Prince Caligastia back on Earth and by doing that I'd unwittingly cast my lot in with him. There was no avoiding it. I belonged on Earth, whether I liked it or not.

Now this sort of quandary is not an issue generally faced by angels, certainly not Watchers of my order. We are created for specific functions and are posted to worlds for indefinite lengths of time. The only reason I could get to travel to Zandana, for example, was because the unrest caused by the rebellion had disrupted so many of the normal lines of communication. I was amused to consider that MA's local administration, which I'd heard wasn't known for its efficiency, most likely had failed to inform their transport network about how to handle Watchers like me.

Once again I found I had to walk the gauntlet of those sneering transport officials who had frowned at my arrival only a few months earlier. Nevertheless, by treating the mocking disdain of the officials as an exercise in patience, I obtained the necessary permit, together with an agreement to travel back to Earth with the next available Transport Seraphim.

As it turned out, this gave me a few more days on Zandana. There'd been no seraphs scheduled for travel in the immediate future, which I took as a sign that fewer and fewer angels wanted to go to Earth. That couldn't be good!

I spent my time before my departure soaking up as much as I could from what I saw of Zandana's technological progress. I should make it clear when I'm speaking of "Zandana's technological progress" that I'm only talking about the more advanced southern continent.

Zanda, their Planetary Prince, after whom both the planet and Zandan, the

great city on the southern continent, were named, had chosen to focus all its development where he believed the people were mature enough to value it.

A point on naming: It had become something of a Local Universe tradition to name planets and Systems after their Princes; for example, the Local System was named Satania, after Satan. He was the closest associate of Lucifer's and was the junior of the two Descending Sons administering the System up to the time of the rebellion.

Although the name *Satan* has become irrevocably entwined with a purely fictional "devil" in the human imagination, the truth is that Satan has not had a great deal to do with what has been happening on Earth. Caligastia has been quite devilish enough!

So it was that Caligastia's city back on Earth had been named Dalamatia before it disappeared under the waves after his chief associate, Daligastia. All of which makes it somewhat providential that your planet calls itself Earth and not one of the possible derivatives of Caligastia's name.

As I mentioned earlier, the city of Zandan as well as the whole continent were blessed with rich natural resources. The central mountain ranges gathered rainwater and held it in dozens of deep turquoise lakes before rushing it down magnificent waterfalls to flow into the broad rivers that so generously watered the crops and orchards of the wide coastal plain.

I was familiar with the farmers' waterwheels from previous trips, and how the farmers would use them to grind their wheat and move water around to their irrigation ditches. This time, however, I saw that they'd been up to something far more advanced. Besides the simple rough-hewn timber wheels I'd observed on the plains, large industrial-size buildings had been built high in the mountains. These, I saw, contained massive new turbines that took advantage of the rapidly moving water to run the dynamos, creating the electricity that was slowly transforming the city.

I'd seen some hints of this before I took to the forest, and it had puzzled me. I thought perhaps I was becoming delusionary, as I was in a somewhat hallucinatory state of mind when arriving on Zandana on this trip. Perhaps, if I'd had a more ready understanding of electromagnetism, I might have been able to recognize the principle by which those carriages I'd glimpsed were able to skim so silently along on their single silver rail.

But, no. I was too confused to make any sense of what I was seeing. Now that I felt more balanced and had the time to look more thoroughly, I could see a spider's web of gossamer threads radiating out from Zandan and across the plains as far as I could see. The rails were barely visible from the mountains unless they glinted in the sun.

The implications of what I was seeing were profound: the hydroelectric plants at the head of various waterfalls were somehow feeding, without observable transmission lines, the growing Maglev system that would soon be linking all parts of the continent. All this progress was tens of millennia ahead of Earth.

Evidently, copper, iron, and zinc had been discovered on the other side of the island, and Prince Zanda had judged the population to be mature enough to handle some of the elementary principles of metallurgy. Soon other useful minerals were discovered, which allowed the Zandana scientists to create some remarkable alloys.

Then there were tutorials in electricity and electrical conductivity with what must have been a focus on the phenomenon of electromagnetism. There was so much the Zandanans would have had to learn to put together such an elaborate transportation system. They'd been extremely clever about it, too.

The city's natural radial design must have suggested the spiderweb pattern that extended far into the forested foothills.

As I rested far above the valley, I could see the shadows of the rails bobbing over the meadows, disappearing among the trees, while the single silver rail, supported by graceful pylons, swept like a great curved gesture hundreds of feet above the ground. I watched the single carriages moving around the concentric circles, halting at the radial intersections for passengers to change to carriages heading out into the hinterlands. Nothing moved very rapidly, but, like the mechanism of a watch, all the carriages were moving and stopping, moving and stopping, in one coordinated dance.

I could barely believe what I was looking at—it just confirmed my initial realization about how far Earth was falling back compared to Zandana's progress. Could all this really have happened since my last visit? Had I been away that long?

Before I could plunge back into the emotional turmoil and the black

depression that had taken me so long to work through as I sat alone in the center of that purple forest, my three days of waiting were over.

Eager to get off-planet, I arrived at the magnificent king tree that acted as the locus of the seraphic transport system (STS) on Zandana.

Perhaps a few words about this STS business are needed, because the basics of the system are bound to sound strange unless you have already grasped how alive and sentient the Multiverse truly is—as a whole and in its many parts. Some functionaries in the inner worlds that a human might consider mere mechanisms are, in fact, sentient beings, created to carry out extremely specific tasks.

Transport Seraphs (TS), for example, are not androids or biological robots or the result of the crude gene splicing we sometimes see performed by mortals in the material worlds. They are fully intelligent spiritual beings whose specific function is to transport super-material beings around the inner worlds and the higher realms of the celestials. A TS is able to do this by enclosing the traveler within a heat shield that serves to keep them safe when moving through subspace at tremendous speeds.

Back in the days when humans gave any serious thought to angels, they had to account for how we might get around, so they gave us wings. Fanciful though wings might be, of course we don’t need them. Yet there is something vaguely winglike when a Transport Seraph spreads the two sides of her heat shield wide to receive a traveler into her embrace.

Mein Host reminds me that in a lucid dream he can think himself from place to place within the dream. And he is half-right. We also have bodies that we have to move around, and we do it as necessity demands within our local domains. It’s not instantaneous, but it is extremely fast. For this we don’t need Transport Seraphs. But we cannot teleport ourselves over interplanetary distances any more than a human can.

However, I quite understand the predicament of the artists when faced with having to distinguish angels from humans in their paintings and sculpture, so it’s wings we’re portrayed with and very beautiful they look, too, when they’re rendered by an artist of genius. But don’t imagine for a moment we actually have wings sprouting from our shoulders. They wouldn’t work anyway. Wings would have to be so large to support an angel’s weight that they would become an impossible encumbrance.

However, when it comes to moving around the vast inner spaces of the Multiverse we have to rely on Transport Seraphs. Although they are dedicated to transporting us to points within the Local Universe, I am told they actually possess the “energy range” to get out into the Superuniverse realms. I won’t go into any more detail on the variety of Transport Seraphs, except to say they are not intended to, nor are they capable of, transporting a material human body. But, you will encounter a particular subgroup of these angels when you shed your mortal coil and ascend through the inner realms of the Multiverse.

On long journeys, these seraphic transporters are known to achieve speeds of over three times the speed of light. This is not quite as impressive as it sounds, because the relationship between time and space, so intimately intertwined in your dimension, becomes progressively less closely woven in the higher frequency realms.

The first time I remember using the STS to get from Jerusem, the Local Universe HQ, down to Earth to join up with the Prince’s mission, the seraph was friendly and explained something of how she functioned. Of course, this was well over a quarter of a million Earth years before the rebellion, so I wasn’t then being given the angelic cold shoulder.

She told me—which I already knew—that I’d fall asleep when she enclosed me in her embrace, only to wake up when we reached my destination. I say *embrace* because that is what it feels like—wonderfully warm and embracing. But, in reality, it’s a self-enclosing heat shield designed to dissipate the friction created at speeds within the denser regions of subspace.

I’ve never had the chance to carefully examine the material of these shields, as I’m invariably asleep before I can probe any deeper. I do recall, however, before I was taken into the transport embrace the previous time, that the exterior surface of the twin shields had a shiny, diamond-like finish with a sheen like shot silk. Idiosyncratically, the same material that appeared so hard and impermeable on the outside became as soft as form-fitting sponge on the inside. That’s as much as I’ve ever been able to discover before I’m asleep. The next moment I’m awake again and getting out at my journey’s end.

Consequently, I had no idea of how long the trip took. I knew Zandana has

been classified as a nearby planet to Earth and must therefore orbit stars in a solar system relatively close to Earth. Yet, Sirius, one of the closest star systems, is some eight and a half light-years away, so I can only imagine it took a lot longer than I believed to get back to Earth.

This was confirmed for me when I saw the state of Caligastia's vast domain covering most of the Middle East, west across North Africa to the Atlantic, and stretching east to the northern border of Persia. It had been devastated.

Much of the fertile land along the North African coast had become desert. Stretches of sandy landscape appeared as if turned to glass, which flashed and glistened in the harsh sunlight. From Africa's West Coast, in a vast swath of territory all the way across the continent to the Nile River, I didn't see one living creature. The jungle and the thickly forested regions to the east were disappearing into a dirty brown smudge. The small clearings in the jungle that once held villages and their plantings stood out from the carbonized surroundings as new growth was just starting to poke its way through the burned dirt.

Even the Eastern Empire showed signs of desertification, especially toward the eastern end of the coast of the Mediterranean—regions now known as Syria, Jordan, and Turkey to the north. Before I left for Zandana, I knew that nuclear weapons were being developed in the laboratories of both hostile empires. What I was observing now was evidently the result of this death-oriented madness.

It wasn't until sometime later, when I met up with one of my colleagues, that I was able to figure out what had occurred. The two sides, spurred on by Caligastia and his midwayers, had worked feverishly to complete fabrication of the bombs and stockpiled as many as possible before the opposition showed signs of attacking.

In the middle of the arms race, Caligastia had his midwayers relocate some of the scientists in the Western Empire to a large island in the Atlantic some five hundred miles off the Portuguese coast. This had set back the laboratories' research and development schedule, as well as the manufacturing process in their enormous underground factories. In their haste to catch up with their enemy, numerous errors had been made, which resulted in many of their bombs failing to explode.

Midwayer spies had apparently penetrated one of the western fabrication plants and reported back the slow rate of progress and the rumors floating around concerning their efficacy. That prompted Caligastia to take advantage of the Western Empire's weakness and order a surprise attack.

As it turned out, it wasn't a complete surprise. An enemy agent, a mole working in the East, was able to get a message back to the West in sufficient time for them to place their bombs, half of which were duds. Not so with the Eastern technology. Not only did more bombs rain down on the Western Empire than on the East, but virtually all exploded successfully. The only survivors were those working underground in the labs and factories that hadn't collapsed.

The Eastern Empire fared much better, although at least a third of the population died in the blasts.

It was hard to believe that this terrible destruction could have been Caligastia's plan. Perhaps he really did lose control of his midwayers and their loyal scientists, who might well have developed their own agendas by that time.

Yet, even if this was so, the ultimate responsibility had to fall on the Prince's shoulders. He was the one who had pushed the weapons technology along so fast, just as it was his decision to share the secrets of the atom with his midwayers. He had certainly become the most cynical and self-serving of creatures by now. I was aware of his negligent attitude toward humans, but how annihilating over two and a half million people served his purposes was beyond my imagination.

Some months later, when I'd returned from a long trip throughout Vanu's far-flung Eastern territories, I got more clues as to what Caligastia was up to.

But first, a brief observation on my tour of Vanu's many settlements, which had by now taken root throughout the Indian subcontinent. They certainly knew about the war, because their skies had darkened for a full three days as thick clouds of ash obscured the sun. Birds had fallen dead out of the sky, and some grazing animals had died a few months later without apparent cause. Apart from that, and the dust cloud only occurred in the northern region of what was now an ever-expanding habitable territory, no one suffered and the event soon passed from memory.

Because Vanu's territories were not subject to Prince Caligastia's constant interference, the Prince's policy of dividing and conquering, his push for more and more devastating weapons, and the ways he found to manipulate his scientists, little energy and social capital was being expended on weapons. As a result, there was a generally higher standard of living in Vanu's territories than anywhere within Caligastia's sphere of influence. Living for the most part in peace, this also had the effect of creating a rapid burst of population growth as people sought to fill the vast empty spaces. Small groups, for example, had by this time crossed over the land bridge to Australia, while other tribal groups were expanding into northern China and Mongolia.

Vanu himself, and his small circle of midwayers, were understandably appalled by the holocaust in Caligastia's western provinces. A nuclear war on a relatively primitive planet was considered by MA as the most shameful incident for a Planetary Prince to have permitted to occur. This particular mindless act of destruction was reckoned even more reprehensible by virtue of Caligastia's complicity in feeding advanced information on weapons technology to both sides of the conflict.

Vanu had suspected that Caligastia's obsessive focus on technological progress was intended to develop weapons with which to invade and occupy his territories. The war ended any immediate prospects of making that plan a reality.

So Vanu's horror at Caligastia's despicable act of genocide was slightly mitigated by knowing those who'd followed him were safe from the Prince's invasion forces at least for the foreseeable future.

# # #

The community awoke to the thin light of dawn easing over the coconut trees behind the row of seaside shacks. The cacophony of the jungle waking up all around them evidently still disturbed some of the more nervous young women. I noticed that Vanessa, in particular, seemed shrouded in anxiety, but then she also must have thought she would have to walk south alone, in the opposite direction of everyone else.

This was the day in which everything, or nothing, would be revealed to them. Today they would discover if these Beings whose directives they were

following so faithfully were going to deliver. It was a make-or-break moment, an ultimate test of faith.

Mein Host saw Vanessa's distress and told her to grab her bathing suit because they were going to go swimming. Ignoring the girl's mild protestations, he ushered her down to the water and soon she was laughing and playing in the waves, her mood lightened considerably.

Prickly pears and coconuts had been picked the previous day and were being split open and laid out for breakfast while the pair had been splashing around in the waves. I detected some relief from those working in the shack at the welcome break from Vanessa's continual complaining. From what I heard of their conversation, I could discern that while they liked Vanessa well enough, there was a general consensus that she wasn't suited to the more rustic life.

"She won't last long out here," said Wendy, a true believer and one of Mary Ann's favorites.

"Yeah, she's not here for the right reasons," said Dave, who I believe was starting to realize that he wasn't long for the community, either.

While everybody was sitting down at breakfast, there was a certain tension in the air. No one wanted to talk about what they might find that day—for fear that the whole affair would turn out to be a wild goose chase. I could feel Mein Host's excitement bubbling under the surface: he'd told Vanessa while they were swimming that he was determined to find where the Beings intended them to settle.

"If Mary Ann believes we're going to discover what we're looking for—then that's good enough for me. We'll definitely find it!"

Vanessa was clearly startled at Mein Host's confidence and exuberance, and I saw in those moments that he realized Vanessa's eyes hadn't yet been opened to Mary Ann's true identity as the incarnate Goddess.

Backpedaling fast, he murmured something about his intuition and splashed some water at Vanessa—who was soon laughing again.

Mary Ann, to her credit, didn't make much of a claim to be the Goddess, although to my knowledge she never denied it. Later, she would name herself first Kali, and then, when that might have been considered too extreme, she called herself Hecate, which seemed to be a tacit acknowledgment of the

identification Mary Ann felt with the dark side of the Goddess.

Mein Host, still a metaphysical novice, had no idea that a Goddess might have a dark side. At this point, however, my ward assumed that others must have had their own direct experience of the Goddess, but as he considered it too delicate a subject to broach, it was impossible for him to know for certain what the others believed.

Because it was in Mein Host's nature to choose to throw himself into any experience presented him, it was always difficult for him to understand that others might be less enthusiastic about plunging into the unknown. He understood their skepticism, because he'd been a skeptic until his own revelation of Mary Ann's divinity, but he had little time for people's wavering indecision. Even when he was most distrustful of Mary Ann, he'd always felt himself to be fully present. Whether he was loathing her, as he did for the first years, or loving and revering her as the Goddess, as he now was, he was always totally involved. As I said, his ability to block out irrelevancies and focus his attention with laser sharpness on what he was doing seemed to be part of his character.

The breakfast complete and the place tidied up, everybody was fiddling around, not quite sure what to do next.

Not so Mein Host; he knew precisely what he was going to do next. First, he filled a bottle with tap water, which had been boiled for safety, grabbed a couple of pieces of coconut meat, stuffed them along with the bottle into his canvas shoulder bag, and, walking through the community, whose members were still milling around aimlessly, started walking northward along the beach on his own.

Looking back, he saw small groups huddling together before going off in various directions. The majority were following him along the beach; others were heading off through the village to take the track they'd noticed running parallel to the coast. And he could just make out a dark form he assumed was Vanessa, plodding determinedly down the beach southward, in the opposite direction.

He waited politely for the first group to join him, and then they all set off together. Other stragglers did their best to catch up, because Mein Host set a good pace, while others in the original group fell back. An occasional word

passed between them, but on the whole there was a quiet concentration on the simple act of walking.

The beach along that part of the Yucatán Peninsula is a modest affair —“barely a beach at all” to hear one of them describe it. At high tide the waves licked along the base of the small cliff that gave away to the dunes behind. With the tide low, there was generally no more than twenty to thirty feet of dirty sand before the seabed dropped away into the depths of the Golfo de Campeche. Although no one would realize it during their time in the Yucatán, this was the very spot where scientists claim the massive asteroid slammed into the Earth sixty-five million years ago, contributing, as every schoolboy knows, to the end of the era of the dinosaurs.

Coconuts in various stages of disintegration littered the sand, along with the normal flotsam and jetsam of modern life, forcing the little group to pick their way through the detritus. Coconut palms, some bending low over the beach, grew in scraggly profusion the entire length of the beach, all the way to Progreso, some fifty kilometers (32 miles) up the coast.

Soon the sun had risen above the crown of the protective trees and was boring down onto the bare heads of our little band of adventurers. They walked on the firm, wet sand, stepping over blackened tree stumps and seaweed, carefully avoiding the transparent piles of beached jellyfish rotting in the sun, their noses wrinkling at the constant jostling of unfamiliar molecules making their way up into their mammalian brains.

Shortly there was a call for a rest. Taking advantage of the shade from some trees perched on the edge of the cliff, their roots already exposed and poking out from the cliffside, they lay sprawled, exhausted, on the sand. Smokes and water were passed around. Looking back along the beach, they could see most of the stragglers had by now veered off into the jungle. One or two were still stomping along in the surf, presumably trying to catch up with them.

When the group set off again, a couple of the women chose to turn back. This became a pattern repeated at each rest stop, so that when Mein Host reached the eleventh or twelfth mile, he found himself quite alone.

He walked on and on as the hours passed, completely alone on the beach. The sun reached its zenith in a cloudless sky and then started dropping over the ocean as he plodded on determinedly, his legs and arms baked red in the

sun. Every few miles he plunged into the surf to cool off and rest for a few minutes. Gulls circled, complaining noisily, waiting for him to move along to land again behind him and continue their squabbling.

The sun was low in the western sky when I saw Mein Host stop in his tracks. None of us observing knew why he had stopped: I heard him later claim it was pure intuition, but it could just as well have been one of his companion angels—a possibility he would have roundly rejected had anyone suggested it. Angels were not part of the community's belief system, and Mein Host hadn't yet had the NDE in which he was made aware of the reality of angels for the first time.

Some have since suggested he stopped right there because he was able to catch a glimpse of what lay in the jungle. But if they were to go there, they would observe for themselves that the height of the cliff precluded any chance of seeing what lay perhaps two hundred feet back from the edge.

Grabbing on to tree roots, Mein Host pulled himself up the steep, sandy incline until he could see over the edge. There were the dunes rippling back to the trees, and in their shade was something large and white just visible through the jumble of branches. A light evening breeze had picked up, and, blowing in from the sea, it seemed to push the lad further into the mystery.

The beach grass sawed at his legs as he hopped painfully in bare feet across the scalding sand of the dunes to get into the shade of the trees. Focusing on where to place his feet, he didn't have a chance to see what was ahead until he was under the trees. He moved slowly onward, circling carefully around the clumps of prickly pear and keeping his eyes on the flash of white through the trees.

Then he stopped again, with an expression of bewildered wonderment on his face. There, opening up in front of him, was a broad meadow. A large white structure with walls more than forty feet high loomed above the tree line to his right. An ancient wooden ladder stood against one of its walls. Looking to his left, he could see the coconut grove, its trees bursting with nuts. The constant roar of the ocean diminished as he slowly made his way across the meadow. He passed a wooden structure on his right. It was leaning slightly with age and was partially roofless, but apart from that it appeared quite habitable. On his left, where the meadow gave way to the coconut grove, there was another small stone structure in an advanced state of ruin.

The sun was now glinting through the trees behind him as he walked, seemingly in a trance, toward the high white walls of the building they would come to call the Monastery.

The inside of this large structure had been gutted long ago. It entirely lacked a roof, and white stucco was pealing off the thick stone walls in a Rorschach of darkened decay. No windows broke through the stonework, and the three large entrances on the south side of the building were merely frayed holes in the massive walls.

The gable walls at either end of the building stood fat and white and uninterrupted by windows, rising to a ridge seventy feet overhead. Plants grew up between the flagstones, and right in the middle of this large structure stood a small leafy tree.

Still entranced, Mein Host walked slowly into the building and across the stone floor to sit with his back against the inside of the west wall. The building was about one hundred feet long and forty feet wide—an extraordinary-size structure to find in the middle of the jungle.

Sitting quietly, his back warm against the wall, the rays of the evening sun slicing through the ruined openings, the light filling the open structure and turning it shades of rose-gold and amber, Mein Host knew he had found what they had been looking for. This was the sacred place toward which the Beings had been guiding them so assiduously for the last month. He knew that with an inner certainty, although, as he told Juliette later, when he got back he had no idea why he was so certain about it.

He must have been sitting there for some time before he caught a slight movement among the leaves of the tree. It wasn’t a large tree, by any means —about fourteen feet high—and it had the dainty, cared-for look of a bonsai tree, tended by a giant.

Peering deeper into the shivering leaves, he could gradually make out the sinuous form of a large, and remarkably plump, black snake. Its scales gleamed with a silk sheen, and its skin had the texture of newly cut coal as it uncurled its body and lazily rearranged its position in the tree. Leaves quivered almost unnoticeably as branches slim as a child’s little finger barely bent under the creature’s obvious weight. The snake was only four or five feet long, but its girth had to be at least seven inches.

He discovered much later, by process of elimination, that it must have been the rather magnificently named Mexican black kingsnake, a constrictor with an appetite for rodents, birds, lizards, and eggs, as well as other snakes. Because they're immune to rattlesnake venom, like most king-snakes, they will snack with gusto on rattlesnakes. Research also revealed that the ideal substrate of the Mexican black kingsnake is the aspen tree.

Mein Host is now sure it was an aspen that was growing in the middle of the monastery: it had all the delicacy of a young aspen, as well as the fluttering whisper of its leaves.

It seemed to the young man that he was observing a remarkable feat of levitation. The compact bodies of all snakes are surprisingly heavy, yet here was the fattest snake he'd ever seen, coiled and lolling in a quaking aspen.

"And it was one fat snake!" In describing it later, he spoke about it as if he were trying to work out a magic trick. How could this be? This was a substantial, heavy-looking snake. It slid with such elegant simplicity through the maze of branches that its distributed weight slipped virtually invisibly, save for the slightest trembling of leaves, through the tree's delicate limbs.

Mein Host watched this sinuous display as though it were a personal message from the gods to him, a Serpent Person, or so Mary Ann had once called him. I don't believe he knew what it really meant, but he claimed that for some reason it simply felt right. How appropriate it was that he found the place; and how deeply attuned it was that a Mexican black kingsnake (never again seen while they were there) was in the monastery to greet him.

This was the final affirmation. This was the place.

* * *

Just as it was Caligastia's way to encourage his powerful kingdoms to invade and conquer weaker ones, so was it Vanu's approach to wield his power far more softly. As his settlements had moved farther east he always made a point of sending out missionaries in advance. The function of this advance guard was not to convert the indigenous natives but rather to get their attention so they might gradually raise the level of the natives' understanding and intelligence.

Fandors, too, previously unknown in those parts, played an important role in dazzling the natives with their empathic charms and their general good

humor.

The missionaries were in no hurry. They were patient people, confident of their own moral righteousness. They understood the dynamics of mental entrainment—that if they simply mixed with the tribe, answering questions, and didn't try to impose a foreign belief system on them, the inherent curiosity of human beings would take care of the rest.

Free of the shackles of contemporary concern for maintaining the integrity of a primitive tribe, Vanu's intention was to carry out the Prince's original mission: to raise the basic consciousness of the natives. Aware that at some point MA would be bound to recall him to Jerusem, he wanted to ensure that his teachings would continue after he was gone.

The terrible war in the West must have deeply troubled Vanu. Evidently, he'd never considered the possibility of an entire civilization being wiped out almost overnight. He had to develop a way of ensuring that something of value would be preserved, even if the worse were to happen.

Earth had been thoroughly mapped in the early days of Dalamatia, well before the uprising and when the staff still had access to their flying craft. All creatures explore their environments as thoroughly as possible, and the staff was no exception to this. They carefully charted the planet—its landmasses and oceans—and plotted the ocean currents and areas of volcanic activity. All this was lost, however, in the chaos following the uprising, leaving Vanu to rely on nothing but his memory and his good sense.

He recalled seeing on the charts a large number of islands that were fertile and yet completely uninhabited, distributed around the Pacific, the main ones about fifteen hundred miles from the South American mainland. There were no large predators, except a type of iguana, whose forebears were assumed to have arrived on the islands carried by the ocean current on floating tree stumps. Birds of a multitude of species existed in wild profusion, barely kept under control by the egg-eating lizards and snakes that seemed to turn up almost everywhere.

Some of the islands were very large and isolated and surrounded by an endless ocean so that Vanu believed they would make a safe repository for his advanced teachings, all of which he wanted to make sure were firmly imprinted in the world mind before he had to make his exit.

This project rapidly became the main focus of Vanu and his closest colleagues' attention, as they made their calculations regarding the equatorial currents. They checked out the seasonal winds and the optimum geographical place from which to embark on the voyage to take advantage of the main currents flowing across the Pacific.

Humans had been using canoes, coracles, and rafts for a long time, but these were simple small craft, only capable of navigating rivers and hugging the coast for short ocean trips. Building boats that could withstand the rigors the open sea, on voyages that might last many months, required a design of a different order. Vanu must have quickly realized he couldn't afford to leave it up to humans to slowly develop larger and larger boats. Even if he had to disregard one of the prime directives again, he knew he had to introduce the necessary improvements if he were going to accomplish his goals before he had to leave the planet.

By this time Vanu's settlements had expanded south along the Malay Peninsula and then farther, island-hopping onto Borneo, finally establishing themselves at the northeastern tip of the island. Other groups made their way farther south, down through New Guinea to cross the land bridge, where now the Torres Straight separates Australia from the mainland.

This expansion into Indonesia, which included Sumatra and Java and the many smaller islands farther south, played right into Vanu's plans. The impenetrability of the virgin jungle on most islands made travel overland almost impossible, forcing both missionaries and natives to take to the water.

Once again, the fandors showed their value in being able to survey the land ahead from the air. When the forest canopy wasn't too thick, they scouted out appropriate places to halt for the night. Their empathic abilities also made them perfect lookouts: they were able to sense when wild animals were approaching and also use the power of their minds to distract the animals, turning them away from the camp.

Hugging the coast of the hundreds of islands of the Indonesian archipelago in their outrigger canoes, they hopped from island to island until they found a pleasant place to settle. Within a couple of generations, a new crop of adventurous souls emerged to continue their journey of exploration. In this simple way, the centuries passed with humans under Vanu's guidance,

spreading throughout Indonesia.

Most humans have a natural fear of the sea. Humans of those distant times, more than seventy thousand years ago, were no different. If anything, they were even more fearful than contemporary people, simply because life in general was inherently so much more dangerous than it is now. This fear of monsters living in the sea, as well as the constant threat of vicious storms, was motive enough to prompt a period of rapid improvement in boatbuilding. And even more significant for Vanu's project was that his people were slowly adapting to a life on the water and were being prepared, unbeknownst to them, for the long voyage to the Pacific Islands.

There were very few survivors from the West's terrible war. Although the bombs were relatively clean, those not killed by the blasts soon died from radiation poisoning. Some of the tribes who had settled farther south on Africa's East Coast and who'd taken to living in caves, emerged unscathed. The prevailing winds blew away the little radiation that had traveled that far south.

But, of course, trade with the northern territories suddenly ceased, along with any news of what had happened. Mining ground to a halt, as the need for metal by the factories up north dried up. Caligastia's wide-ranging authority structure—using his midwayers as his proxies through whom he was able to maintain overall control—broke down on the first day of the war when the Northern Kingdom launched their surprise attack.

The southern tribes suddenly realized that they were completely isolated and, although the irony would have escaped them, they found they had been "bombed back into the Stone Age."

Spain, and much of the region stretching along the north coast of the Mediterranean, including Italy and the Peloponnesian Peninsula, lay stripped bare of any vegetation, leaving the earth scorched and barren for a thousand years. The worst of the devastation occurred in Asia Minor, and the coastal regions at the eastern end of the Mediterranean including the settlements that had grown up around Caligastia's locus of activity. All this region was totally destroyed by the Western Empire's furious counterattack.

I overheard Caligastia reassuring his midwayers that they would remain unaffected by the bombs, or the ensuing radiation, as they occupied a parallel,

and slightly higher frequency domain. But I knew perfectly well that all his plans had gone up in smoke. He tried to claim the cataclysm had been his intention all along and that “it was a good way of clearing away the cockroaches!” Yet I think even his most junior midwayers would have known he felt betrayed by the very scientists with whom he’d shared the secrets of the atom.

In all the rants, I never once heard the Prince assume any responsibility for what he’d done. He would (or should) have been aware that passing along nuclear technology to a primitive world was utterly forbidden by MA. And to have done it in the spirit of personal revenge with such ruinous results for the human population was absolutely reprehensible.

Caligastia must have known he would have to pay for this at some point. Perhaps he no longer cared. He’d committed the very worst crime in MA’s book, so what was the worst that MA could do to him, after all? Annihilate him? Make him as if he’d never existed? Isn’t that the phrase MA uses?

What an appalling thought! Far more terrible for one who knows himself to be an eternal being than perhaps for humans, who live with the uncertainty of a 50/50 chance of personal extinction at the end of their life.

Possibly by that time Caligastia really was starting to go insane. It was hard for me to judge. While his recent actions had resulted in utter devastation and the death of millions, it could hardly be called irrational. In fact, it was a perfectly rational plan—if unbridled ambition and unmitigated revenge can ever be considered rational—but a plan that went badly wrong.

So perhaps it was an incipient madness rearing its head when I overheard him murmuring over and over again, as if it were a mantra: “I’m still here. . . . I’m the God of this World! I’m still here. . . . I’m the God of this world. . . .” Then, when boasting to his midwayers, he constantly reiterated, “Those damnable cockroach scientists! After all I’ve given them!” with never a hint that he understood how thoroughly he’d hoisted himself on his own petard.

I’d suspected that something was starting to go awry, and the once-noble Prince Caligastia, subsequent to the rebellion, was becoming progressively more unhinged. But I believe it was in observing his behavior immediately after the war that finally confirmed for me the depth of my error of judgment in choosing to follow him.

* * *

Dusk was falling, and the snake had disappeared into the shadows when Mein Host raised himself reluctantly to his feet to leave. It was going to be a long walk back, and the tide was already coming up fast.

A full moon was starting to gleam through the coconut palms. The evening breeze was picking up, rustling the leaves and shaking a couple of coconuts loose to land with a loud (and mysterious) thud on the ground. Mein Host made his way out of the coconut grove toward the beach, the tree trunks bending and rubbing against one another as though giving each other a welcome scratch at the end of the day. Scrambling down the cliff, he found the width of the beach reduced to a few yards and getting rapidly smaller as he walked through deeper and deeper surf.

Following this long, strange journey, he was exhausted, of course, but his elation kept him plodding on. When the beach became impassable, he pulled himself up the cliff and struggled through the jungle until he could get back down on the sand again. He plowed on, sometimes wading through the deep surf, kicking up sparks of bioluminescence, and at other times barging blindly into clumps of bushes while trying to negotiate the jungle undergrowth.

Finally the moon was high enough for him to see his way more clearly and pick up speed. He clearly realized that he was going to get back very late and must have been hoping at least a few people would be awake to share his excitement.

He walked stolidly on for the next few hours, increasing his speed as the tide ebbed. By this point I could tell that he was moving on automatic pilot. He'd pushed through the point of exhaustion and was now working almost entirely on his will. He hadn't seen a soul on his return trip and must have assumed (accurately) that everyone else had given up the search and packed up for the night.

Close to midnight he started looking for the village and the shack that was their current home. In the way that landscapes and objects are said to appear so bafflingly different on a return trip from how they looked traveling in the opposite direction, it was obvious to me that he didn't know where to turn off the beach to find the shack. Add to this the further complication of moon shadows, his exhaustion, and the utter strangeness of the situation, as well as

the impossibility of being able to see over the cliff as to where the tiny village of Sisal started, and I was astonished that he found his way back at all.

But, sure enough, the lad's intuition took over again (although it may again have been at the prompting of one of his companion angels) and without seeing any sign of habitation he unerringly chose the right spot to climb back up the cliff and find the shack behind the dunes—just where he'd left it.

Almost everyone was fast asleep when he pushed aside the mosquito netting pinned up over the open door, and which someone had thoughtfully given up for general use. He could see candles burning at the far end of the second room, behind the blanket strung up to give Mary Ann and Robert their privacy, and stepped carefully between the recumbent bodies to make his way toward the light.

Mary Ann was quietly reading with Robert asleep beside her when Mein Host whispered his way in. She could see immediately from his face that he'd found what they'd all been searching for, yet she evidently didn't want to get her hopes up.

Somewhat taken aback by her surprisingly flat affect, it must have suddenly occurred to Mein Host that somebody else had discovered quite another place and had already arrived back with the good news.

Seeing his face drop, Mary Ann quickly assured him no place had yet been found and that they'd agreed to continue the search the next day.

Then started the questions. Robert woke up, and between them they peppered the exhausted lad with questions. Did he see the ladder? Were there really "high white walls"? How did he know when to turn off the beach? What about the coconut grove? Could he see the water from the place? On and on it went, the excitement in the small space rising as the signs were being ticked off.

"We have to see this place right now!" Mary Ann was insisting while Robert was sleepily protesting at the lateness of the hour. The buzz of thrilled whispers woke up the room, and soon they were clustering around to hear what my ward had found.

"There's no time to waste," Mary Ann said again. "We have to go and make sure. Right now!"

The one car in the village—an ancient Jeep, a relic of the Second World

War—had been found and the arrangements made for renting it while Mein Host had been away. It was to be picked up the following day. However, Canadian Dave, one of those who knew a few words of Spanish, was instructed to go and fetch it, even if it meant getting the owner out of his bed for the keys.

Half an hour later, the battered old machine was puttering along the coastal track with Dave driving, his six-and-a-half-foot frame crammed into the front seat, Mein Host riding shotgun, and Mary Ann, Robert, and Wendy crushed together in the back.

The moon flooded the trees and meadows with a soft silver light. The serrated leaves of jungle plants whipped at the sides of the Jeep as it bumped along the trail.

I knew better than anyone else there that Mein Host had no idea whether the place he'd found would be visible from the track. Suddenly it seemed as if all the elation drained out of him, replaced by a horrible sense of doubt.

Even if they did find it in the dark, was it the right place? Was it really the sacred place they'd all been looking for? Or was it just a bunch of ruins that Mein Host had deluded himself into believing must be the place?

The Jeep rumbled on in the darkness.

18

Varieties of Planetary Experience

Caligastia's Malevolence, Vanu's Eastern Territories, Occult Challenges, a Prophecy Fulfilled, and Traveling to Lemuria

Prince Caligastia, I realized, had given away the family jewels—the atomic secrets that are so carefully protected. His Western Kingdoms were bound to have surged ahead of Vanu's Eastern territories—at least militarily. Yet, as Aesop points out in his fable of the Tortoise and the Hare, the race doesn't necessarily go to the swiftest.

As I've previously mentioned, maturing planetary cultures can be divided into those that pursue technology and those that do not. I have offered Earth's whales and dolphins as an example of the latter. These cultures, however, are in the minority on third-density worlds and are almost always aquatic in nature. Yet neither does an aquatic species necessarily preclude developing a technology capable of space flight as the beings who visited Earth from the planet Iarga.

It may well turn out to be significant that at least two of the extraterrestrial groups known to have visited this planet—the Nommo from the Sirius Star System and the more recent visit from Iarga—were both aquatic and technological. Most likely, there are more aquatic species currently on Earth, because unidentified craft are reliably reported coming and going from the oceans of the world.

It is a galactic axiom, according to a group of extraterrestrials from Planet Itibi-Ra, that any technological society will at some point "have to make friends with its sun." At the core of this observation is the recognition that in order to become a true galactic civilization, a society will need to progress through a stage of understanding and mastering the energies of their star.

In a very practical sense, this involves a number of necessary incremental steps, the development of each stage building on the previous one. It requires,

at the very least, an understanding of astronomy, chemistry and metallurgy, gravitation, electromagnetism, the quantum states of matter, and the intricacies of the nuclear fusion processes happening on their sun. The list also would have to include all the hardware of scientific exploration, from telescopes to electron microscopes. This historical process of intellectual and scientific advancement can take hundreds or thousands of years to come to fruition.

At the point in a culture's development when its scientists understand the energies locked into matter, it faces a very pointed series of choices. These decisions will be governed, in their turn, by the level of emotional and spiritual maturity of that civilization. A belligerent, emotionally immature society is likely to use nuclear energy to create weapons. A wiser technological culture will move through this stage and, barring other misfortunes, will develop space flight and be welcomed into the galactic fraternity.

For this reason, this moment in a technological culture's evolution is considered such a watershed in MA's eyes. It is seen as a portal. Either a planet passes through it unscathed or, if still warlike, that culture becomes confined to its own world. An aggressive civilization that possesses space flight is fortunately a rarity, because contentious cultures either tend to learn from the errors of their ways, or they destroy themselves before they have a chance to get out of their solar systems.

The development of atomic and hydrogen bombs also poses a far more serious problem than is generally understood by the society that develops them. Bombs of this sort not only cause the devastation you have observed within your frequency domain, but the immense conflagrations also create an unfortunate impact on neighboring frequency domains.

A culture in which science has developed an awareness of other inhabited frequency domains will be far more considerate of the possible ramifications of their weapons (if they have them) and the impact they might have on their neighboring frequency domains.

Under normal circumstances—to which life on Earth due to the Lucifer Rebellion is an obvious exception—the evolution of a technological society is an orderly affair. Technology progresses—sometimes through tens of thousands of years of experiments and discoveries, advances and setbacks—

and parallels a steady development in the social and moral welfare of the planet. As technology contributes to a rising standard of living and greater social egalitarianism**,** the causes of the unrest that nurtures aggression tend to diminish. In such a society, with greater social equity comes more of a focus on education; when there is a more equable distribution of basic resources, there are fewer causes for social disruption; when an individual or a society has fewer reasons to be fearful and defensive, the attention can turn to caring for self and others.

It may be surprising to know that mortal beings on all planets, as Sons of God, are fundamentally good. This is a more philosophically complex issue than I have space for here, as there are many ways of expressing goodness, as there are even more ways of straying from the path of goodness. But merely to say that when a planetary population is well educated, when they have what they need to live free of stress, and when the general level of intellectual and emotional intelligence rises to a point at which the individuals' well-being is knowingly interdependent with the wellbeing of others, then the nature of this essential goodness becomes more apparent.

Whether a species chooses to remain on their planet of origin, or whether their physiology supports the manipulation of physical matter, making it more likely that they'll put those hands to work, both types of species face different challenges. A planet-bound species, like Earth's cetaceans, tends to focus on developing their mental and spiritual resources instead of developing their environment through the application of technology.

Over time, such a species may well figure out how to leave their bodies at will, to travel the highways and byways of the vast Multiverse. They become respected citizens of the inner worlds and take on specific teaching functions within the Dreamtime, and then, like the noble cetaceans, they become the guardians of their fellow sentient creatures. Yet, should the time come when they need to leave their planet in their physical bodies, these species will be reliant on other spacefaring species for transportation.

The challenges facing a purely technological society should be all too evident from the current geopolitical situation on Earth. And yet the roots of this dissension do not lie in any particular blackness of the human soul or in the odious concept of "original sin." In Earth's case, much of the contention finds its genesis in the decisions and actions taken by a number of officials in

the Local Universe bureaucracy, which has then been further compounded by the actions of the Planetary Prince and his cadre of rebel midwayers and the corruption, greed, and fear with which they have polluted the World Mind.

This era of human history has long been hidden from humanity. Granted, in contemporary terms, those difficult times have been lost in the mists of prehistory, but it won't come as any surprise that Caligastia and his henchmen did their utmost to cover their tracks.

Caligastia's use of the Roman Church, for example, to distort any true understanding of the past is regarded as such a classic act of malevolence that I've heard from other Watchers that it's now being taught in the Melchizedek universities as a cautionary tale for future Planetary Princes in training.

Yet it's the deep imprints in the World Mind that remain: Caligastia's pride, his ambition and cruelty, and the terrible psychic and emotional destruction he left in his wake continue to reverberate down through the ages. These ancient negative thoughtforms, floating freely in the World Mind, are drawn to those people manifesting similar qualities.

Such thoughtforms can be thought of as mental parasites looking for a fertile mind to feed off. If you observe your own life and that of those around you from this point of view, you will doubtless grasp how deeply embedded these negative imprints have become, how they appear to shape so many aspects of social and political life.

It is true to say that both the tragically low opinion many humans have of themselves (the original sin syndrome) and the exaggeratedly self-important view others have (hubris) can be traced directly back to all those millennia of Caligastia's malevolent actions. This perversion of the essential nature of a mortal species is regarded as one of Caligastia's most malicious influences.

I trust that this small diversion will serve to convey just how seriously Caligastia's offenses were perceived by MA and their agents.

The war in the West allowed Vanu and his people in the Asian territories a long period during which they could be confident that Caligastia would remain effectively powerless. Vanu knew Caligastia too well to think he wouldn't make another effort, but at least the Prince would have to start over and build up his weapons development program from scratch. This would be certain to take him many thousands of years to accomplish, and it wouldn't

be so easy to persuade humans with an ancient memory of a cataclysm to develop such destructive weapons once again.

More importantly, from Vanu's immediate point of view, this would allow sufficient time for him to fulfill his plan to move some of his people onto the Pacific Islands.

Because Vanu's intentions aligned as closely as possible with MA's original objectives, human affairs in his sphere of influence tended to develop more in harmony with the natural world. In contrast to Caligastia's constant manipulation of humans for his own purposes, Vanu's approach was basically laissez-faire with a minimum of guidance. Vanu had a deep faith in the natural developmental path of a mortal species, as laid out and anticipated by MA, and reiterated a million times, in as many worlds throughout the Multiverse.

Vanu knew that if he stood back and allowed humans to make their own decisions, their tendency would be to make the correct ones. While this approach might be thought naive or foolish to contemporary ears, that is another distortion I attribute to Caligastia's nefarious influence.

After observing Vanu over the millennia, I've come to think that he believed his main role, given the corrupting conditions of the uprising, was to ensure a continuance of the worship of the Unseen God that was originally introduced in Dalamatia. As long as that spiritual center could be maintained, he believed everything else would unfold naturally.

In this, he was partially correct. Had he allowed, for example, the lead poisoning to continue—as natural an event as any—he might well have lost his entire human population. And, as I previously mentioned, he felt he needed to compromise by allowing the worship of both Sun and Earth as a direct and tangible representation of the First Source and Center. The concept of the Unseen God, as well as that of the Indwelling Father Spirit, proved to be too abstract and advanced for a world at that early stage of development, especially one ravaged by the consequences of a celestial uprising.

Now Vanu had to plan for the population's migration to the islands. He hoped to make it appear as much as possible the result of natural human curiosity and your species' adventurous spirit.

Over the four millennia that Vanu expanded his territory onto the large

island of Borneo, more and more people were traveling down the chain of islands, bringing the expertise of the northern territories with them. The outrigger canoes, used for island-hopping over the centuries, had become larger over the years, until they were able to carry up to thirty people.

Using these larger craft, they rowed from island to island, crossing the Sulu Sea to find themselves among the myriad islands of the Philippines. Within five hundred years, one of the groups had made its way up to the northern end of Luzon Island, and, being a thoroughly seagoing people by this time, they settled along the bays and gulfs of the mountainous eastern coast.

This is where the next breakthrough occurred in boatbuilding. The crossing to the Philippine Islands was by far the longest and most challenging they'd yet encountered. A number of small craft had disappeared in the sudden storms. Some had been buffeted against reefs that could tear a canoe apart. In addition, vicious currents could whip up unexpectedly in the Sulu Sea and barrel in from the South China Sea, threatening to put an end to their easterly migration.

Vanu realized that the migrants would need much larger and more stable craft if they were going to challenge the Pacific successfully. This slowed them up for a couple of centuries. Everything changed, however, when a group of Vanu's scouts located a large region of balsa wood trees (*Ochroma pyramidale*) growing in the valleys along the coast. The species was hitherto unknown to them, which was barely surprising since the balsa tree wasn't indigenous to the Philippines and the seeds had to have been carried all the way across the Pacific from South America.

From the start they realized that the wood had exactly the quality they needed for their new concept—large seagoing rafts. Once the tree was cut down and into logs and laid out in the tropical sun for a season, the water, trapped in the remarkably large cells of the wood, would evaporate. This resulted in an extremely strong yet light material. But, of even more interest to boatbuilders, it was completely unsinkable when they tested it, even in cyclone-size waves.

They found that smaller rafts were apt to capsize in the worst conditions. This compelled them to tie the logs into larger and larger rigid, floating platforms, until each one could comfortably carry more than a hundred men

and women. Four, and sometimes as many as eight or ten, huts on the larger craft were constructed of bamboo with roofs of palm leaves and tied to the deck in positions judged to increase the raft's stability. It was assumed those traveling on the rafts would sleep outside on the deck, and the huts would be used for those falling ill as well as offering some minimal protection from sun and storms.

Island hopping in outrigger canoes relied on the use of paddles and manpower. There had been some limited attempts to sail with the wind, but on the short inter-island trips that hadn't been necessary. The experience turned out to be valuable when it came to equipping the large rafts with rudimentary sails. Yet, here again, they were fortunate to come across the ideal substance from which to make their sails.

The wild buffalo skins that had been sewn together for the sails on the outriggers had always proved too weighty and unwieldy to use, especially in stormy weather. So when the first of the forest monitor lizards was killed and its skin scraped, dried, and oiled, the result was a large and remarkably strong sheet of flexible material.

This confrontation is easier to write about than to participate in, because it must have taken great courage for the first man to bring down a forest monitor. I didn't personally see this happen, but I had witnessed the many tragic occasions when the enormous, carnivorous Komodo dragons, living on some of the southern islands, caught and dined on one of the settlers. The Komodo dragons were fast and numerous and horribly aggressive. They were the only carnivorous creatures on their islands and appeared all too enthusiastic to broaden their diet when the settlers arrived.

Glad to move on up north, the migrants had settled into their new camp on the Luzon coastline before they encountered the first of the forest monitors. Mature lizards grew up to ten feet in length, and this one happened to be even larger and similar to the Komodos, the creatures of their nightmares, the ones they'd run away from in terror.

Some time passed before they were sure the lizards were fruit eaters and appeared to show little interest in attacking the new arrivals. But there was always a chance that they would revert to a more ancient diet.

That is why I say that it must have taken great courage to slaughter that first monitor. The hunter in question had dropped on the lizard's back from

the low-hanging bough of a tree and had apparently hung on, stabbing the creature in the neck while it thrashed its powerful body to rid itself of the killer on its back. I was told the fight lasted for more than twenty minutes before the lizard finally died. What an admirable species, these humans, I recall thinking at the time.

As it turned out, not only did forest monitors' skins provide ideal material for sails, but the lizards' meat turned out to be palatable and nutritious. Streams carrying the rainwater off the mountains were plentiful, and the waters off the coast provided for rich fishing. More and more people were arriving, following the trail blazed by the first group.

As the human settlement grew in size along Luzon's northeastern coastline, Vanu made a modest start on what was to become one of the most massive agricultural and building projects of the antediluvian world. He organized the cutting of a few simple platforms into the volcanic slopes of the mountains along the Luzon coastline to take advantage of the rich soil, as well as catching and holding the rainwater. Much later these slopes would be sculpted by skilled Lemurian builders into the magnificent stepped fields that follow the contours of the mountains for miles—and which you can still see in a much-degraded form to this day.

Yet the great Pacific voyage still awaited them.

* * *

A full moon cast its icy glaze over the jungle as the ancient Jeep puttered along the trail. Suddenly the jungle gave way to a wide meadow on the left-hand side, and Mein Host caught the familiar glint of a white wall gleaming among the coconut trees on the far side of the meadow.

The Jeep broke sharply to a halt, and the five of them piled out. Helping each other over the rusting metal gate, they started to make their way across the meadow, drawn by the mystery of what lay ahead. Mein Host led the way, with Mary Ann beside him, the other three lagging behind. Both of them broke into a run when they got closer to the high white ruin.

Inside, the large building appeared even larger in the silvery light. The five walked around in awed silence before gathering near the tree in the center. The snake was long gone. The pervasive silence only emphasized the distant noise of the ocean. Even Canadian Dave, not one easily silenced, stood in

quiet reverence.

Mary Ann was the first to speak.

“Extraordinary!” She said in a low voice. “Look at the light—the way it fills the place. . . . You can feel it—you can almost breathe it in.”

I watched Wendy, ever attentive to Mary Ann’s slightest whim, taking noisy gulps of air.

Indeed, it was magical. The moon was almost directly overhead, pouring its reflected sunlight through the open roof, trapping the light between the high white walls and bouncing it to and fro, slowing it to the consistency of plasma.

“This is the place,” Robert said quietly, as if to himself, with some surprise in his voice. There were murmurs of agreement from the others. I could feel Mein Host glowing with pride and pleasure. I was glad he didn’t need to speak.

Then the strangest thing happened.

It had been a clear, cloudless sky throughout the evening and the moon had shone uninterrupted throughout their nocturnal escapade. Then, suddenly, without warning, it didn’t. From being filled with soft light, the space was thrown into pitch darkness. An equally sudden wind picked up and whirled briefly around the five standing figures.

I have to admit that I was as surprised as they were, although, of course, I could perceive them clearly while they could barely see each other.

The next thing I knew, all five of them, as if they were one person, were running for their lives, tripping and stumbling, picking themselves up, fleeing as though possessed . . . out of the building and across the meadow, their shouts and yelps turning to hysterical laughter the farther they away got from the ruins. Throwing themselves back over the gate, still heaving with a laughter tinged now with some awkwardness, they gathered around the Jeep, panting for breath and leaning against the side of it for support.

They were quiet on the way back. The clouds had disappeared as mysteriously as they’d so recently blotted out the moon, and the track was light enough for Dave to turn off the headlights. It seemed like the right thing for him to do.

I could feel Dave’s profound embarrassment. Then I understood why. In

his late thirties, the Canadian was the oldest in the group and believed himself more worldly and experienced than the others. He'd joined the community just before they left England and so had missed the sessions and the Communication Courses that had been so important in opening up the consciousness of the others. He also considered himself a prime skeptic and had showed little interest in Robert's teachings. Dave was there for the adventure. But because he felt tormented by his unrequited desire for Mary Ann, which he had never summoned up the courage to admit to her, and barely even to himself, his comedic persona had been starting to wear thin.

When darkness had fallen so suddenly and unexpectedly back in the monastery, it was Dave who was immediately overcome with terror. It was as though all his demons burst through into his consciousness in an explosion of fear. He panicked and starting running full tilt for the entrance. The others had empathically picked up Dave's terror and reflexively responded by running, every bit as terrified, until it had dawned on them that the fear wasn't theirs.

Arriving back at the shack, they picked their way through sleeping bodies and retired to their particular places for a few hours' rest before dawn broke.

I was able to overhear, from a few scraps of conversation, that they all knew they'd found the place to which they'd been guided halfway across the world.

Mein Host fell asleep with the feeling that he'd accomplished something important for the group. His Goddess was smiling on him.

The community awoke the next day to a clear sky and the sea as flat and smooth as polished azurite. Inside the shack, however, all was not quite as glowing. The failure to find anything resembling their final destination was weighing down the atmosphere as people quietly prepared for breakfast.

Mary Ann and Robert hadn't appeared yet. The other three who'd been in the Jeep the previous evening appeared to have a mutual agreement not to say anything until the Oracle publicly acknowledged the find.

There was little talk over a breakfast of yet more chunks of coconut meat and the sloppy slices of pink prickly pear, some faces showing they were already getting bored with the limited fare. I could see that people were

steeling themselves for yet another slog along the beach in the heat of the day.

“Mad dogs and Englishmen . . .” Dave tried to state what was on everyone’s mind but was interrupted with a chorus of groans.

Wendy caught Mein Host’s eye, smiled knowingly, and winked. She was an attractive young woman with something of the look of a young but insecure Sigourney Weaver. She was tall and flat-chested, rather boyish, with delicate limbs and equally delicate features on her small, lightly freckled, face. She wore her dark, curly hair in a frizzy halo and tended to pull on the strands and nibble on the ends when she was thoughtful. When she was happy, her cornflower-blue eyes sparkled with joy behind her heavy-rimmed glasses.

I could feel that Wendy was drawn to Mein Host, but she was a shy young woman from a suburban home who’d never been able to express her feelings freely to the lad. They’d even shared an apartment together with four others when he was still at architectural college and she was taking secretarial courses.

She would never admit it to herself, but she’d originally become interested in the community because of her attraction to my ward. Consequently, she was among the first to join up and soon became one of Mary Ann’s favorites.

After Mein Host had his flaming argument with Mary Ann and left the group for two years, Wendy, and a number of his other friends who had become involved with the group, stayed the course. This two-year period of having her weekly E-meter sessions with Mary Ann and all those Communication Courses she attended during those years had drawn Wendy out and made her far more confident. She was naturally delighted when my ward rejoined the group.

Mein Host, in his turn, had never been attracted to Wendy, or “little Wendy,” as he’d referred to her behind her back in the old days, because she was so unformed and needy. As the reader will have gathered, Mein Host could be rather full of himself. And besides, he tended to choose women who were more of a challenge.

After his sudden revelation in Nassau that Mary Ann was the Goddess, Mein Host felt he’d been welcomed into the most select of little clubs, Mary

Ann’s half a dozen favorites, her inner circle of adoration. Although they never talked openly about it, Wendy was clearly one of those who believed they were serving the incarnate Goddess. This unspoken recognition had drawn Wendy and my ward closer, but throughout the months, from back in London to their time in the Yucatán, there appeared to be a tacit agreement among the whole group not to sexualize any relationships.

So the wink that passed between the pair as they were finishing breakfast was warm and friendly but entirely lacking in any erotic content.

Sitting around outside the shack in the cool of the early morning, breakfast behind them, there was a movement of the curtain in the back, and then Mary Ann and Robert appeared. They were standing on the porch, the dogs pooling around their feet, with the Oracle triumphantly waving a bright aquamarine-and-lavender-colored silk scarf.

“We’ve found it! We’ve found it! The place . . . it’s the place! We found it all right!” She was calling and smiling and waving her colored scarf. Robert, beside her, was grinning and nodding.

Disbelief—“How could anybody have found it? Nobody had when we went to sleep last night!”—turned to a wave of surprise, and then to joy, as the impact of the miracle seeped in. The feeling swept through the group like a sweet-scented summer breeze. The Oracle had spoken.

I could feel Mein Host wondering whether Mary Ann was going to claim the discovery for herself, but, no, she gestured for him to tell his story, which he did with some flourish.

While a number people had walked along the beach, all except Mein Host had given up and turned back or cut into the jungle to pick up the track. Only one other person had walked the full twenty miles, and he hadn’t had the intuition to climb up over the cliff at precisely the right point. Remember the Beings’ prediction? “Within the sound of the sea, but not within the sight of it.”

Then, everyone wanted to know what it was that impelled Mein Host to go to look right there.

“Did you go and look every few hundred yards?” asked Dave the skeptic, to some quickly stifled giggles.

“Was it the Beings? Did the Beings tell you when?” asked a true believer.

“How on earth did you manage to walk that far?!” queried a badly sunburned young woman.

“How did you know it was the place?” That question was repeated when Mein Host appeared as bewildered as everyone else.

“I have no idea. Must have been intuition.” The lad was blushing beneath his tan and, strangely for him, struggling for words. “And no, Dave, I wasn’t popping in and out. I think I went into the trees a couple of times . . . just to get out of the sun. I just don’t know how I did it.”

“Yes, but when you got into the building, how did you know then it was the right place?”

Then he told them the story of the snake in the tree and the golden light and his feeling of utter rightness, of coming home.

Mary Ann broke in to tell the story of their midnight exploit. She said how she and Robert had also known immediately that this was the place they were looking for.

“But it’s not going to be easy,” Mary Ann was saying. “It’s a very long walk and there’s no other way you can get there. And when we are there, it’s not going to get any easier. It’s a ruin. There’s almost nothing there.” She was looking around to see what reaction she was getting. I’d seen her do this before. She loved to challenge her people.

“Of course, if it is too much for you,” she continued, her slight Scottish burr exuding scorn, “you can always leave now. Go right back to Mérida . . . tell your folks you had a good vacation. If you’re not up for it. . . .”

Robert broke in, softening the mood, as he often felt compelled to do when Mary Ann was playing bad cop. “It’s a beautiful and mysterious place, but there is also something very strange about it. It’s not altogether comfortable —yet, it’s the place all right.

“Remember what the Oracle was saying about the light suddenly being completely turned off—like someone hit the light switch? Couldn’t have been a better metaphor, could it? We’re going to need to be open to the light and the dark. That’s what it means.” Robert paused, as though surprised at his own certainty.

“Which is exactly what we’re all about, isn’t it?” Mary Ann said, looking around from where she was now sitting on the top step of the porch.

“Unifying the opposites. Confronting our darkness, accepting it, loving it. Becoming complete people.”

“So, here’s how we’ll do it,” Robert said, breaking a long silence, during which each person was mulling over the Oracle’s words. “This is a sacred place, as the Oracle was saying. If you’re not pure enough, you’re not going to be able to find it. There’s no point in even trying until you’re ready.”

It was unusual to hear Robert being so assertive and it came to me that these were Mary Ann’s words coming out of her husband’s mouth. They must have arranged it between them before they appeared that morning—she was always pushing him to appear more commanding.

“Each one of you is going to have to find it for yourselves. You know it’s there. You know the direction to walk. It’s up to you! To each of you.” Robert turned to go back into the shack, bent to help the Oracle to her feet, and together they retreated back to their quarters behind the curtain.

The initial enthusiasm ebbed after Robert’s challenge had been issued. People milled around in some confusion, each of them wondering whether they were pure enough, with Dave asking loudly: “What the hell is ‘pure enough’ anyway?! What do they mean by *pure*? Geez! If it’s what I think it is, I’ve blown that years ago!” There was some rueful amusement.

Mein Host got another knowing wink from Wendy to stay put. Mary Ann had whispered something in her ear as she was leaving, which Wendy was clearly passing along to the young man. This was affirmed sometime later when Wendy drew my ward aside to explain he would be riding there in the Jeep, together with her, the Oracle, and the Teacher. Then, later, he could return the car and walk back.

“We’ve only got the Jeep for today,” Wendy said, lowering her voice, “then it goes off to Mérida for the next few weeks. And it’s the only one in the village. So we can’t take everyone. And the Oracle says not to let Dave know we’re going by car. Okay?”

“Tell me when we’re leaving. And I’ll keep mum about Dave. He got really scared last night. His hands were shaking on the wheel all the way back, did you see it?”

“Just keep a lid on it, okay?”

I like to take stock every once in a while for Mein Host’s sake.

I saw more clearly than ever that he failed to perceive the dynamics of the psychic web his Goddess was weaving—and not simply around him. By deliberately creating an aura of sacred mystery around Xtul (pronounced Shtool), the Maya name for the ruined nineteenth-century salt factory and the extensive estate on which the high white walls stood. She was owning it, putting her stamp on it, as if it were she who had discovered it. And by challenging each of them to find the place, she, through Robert, had created a situation that could only be fraught with competition, conflict, and self-doubt.

This was a brilliant, if cruel, move. In many of Mary Ann's followers' eyes, she had guided them here; she had thrown in her lot with the Beings; and she was leaving them stranded on a thin strip of beach, with no money, no food, and the flimsiest of shelters. And, worst of all, she was leaving them all in the most agonizing quandary.

If they set off and walked the exhausting twenty miles and then they proved too unworthy to find the "high white walls," would they then have to plod all the way back in shame?

Perhaps they ought to wait in Sisal until they somehow felt pure enough to embark on the trek.

"And what if we never find it?" This was an agonizing whine from Vanessa, echoed by some of the other less-confident women.

I watched with some amusement when a few of them sidled up to Mein Host in hopes of prying the truth from him. Even if he had known what to tell them, I don't believe he would have been able to disregard Robert and Mary Ann's oracular challenge. He told the questioners that if he was to walk along the beach again, he wasn't at all sure he'd be able to repeat the process.

"I can't remember where to turn off the beach" he got tired of saying. "Look, it was miles and miles. That's all I know. I must have been in a trance, or something . . ."

The whole affair had been a modest miracle of sorts, as far as he was concerned. I saw that he couldn't wait to get back there—to the sacred place, the holy place, to Xtul. Regardless, if it turned out to be anybody else's sacred place, I could tell from the changing tones of Mein Host's emotional and spiritual bodies, that he was quite certain it was going to be his place of transformation.

If one of the sure signs of human madness is doing the same action again and again, failing each time, and repeating the action without essentially changing it, by those standards the once-noble Prince Caligastia could by this time be thought of as “barking mad” (a phrase Mein Host’s friend, John Michell, used to scathingly describe myopic true believers in any ideology).

There was something of a Greek tragedy in this. Prince Caligastia was a Descending Son of what MA’s celestial hierarchy calls the Lanonandek Order of Sonship. As such, he was not indwelt by the Divine Spark, the Atman, that aspect of God that shares each human’s journey. This doesn’t mean that Caligastia was not a high being—he certainly was, by human standards. But it does point out a fundamental difference between mortals and Planetary Princes. Under normal circumstances, on normal planets, the Prince works closely with the multitude of celestial workers, including a mortal’s companion angels when necessary.

In Caligastia’s case, although many observers—such as myself—did align ourselves with him after the rebellion, there seemed to be a mutual agreement among all the companion angels present at that time to intervene whenever possible to prevent Caligastia from influencing their wards. In this they have a tradition among themselves that has continued to this day.

And you, dear reader, and your distant ancestors, can be grateful for this.

One of the great hazards facing a Planetary Prince if he steps off the path is that he is a great deal less creatively ingenious than the mortals he presides over—a lesson Caligastia failed to learn again and again as he blindly repeated the same errors of judgment.

As we know, one of the main back-stories to the terrible war, a war for which Caligastia was still unwilling to admit any responsibility, was his decision to move some of his scientists to the island in the Atlantic.

He clearly hoped to have saved a few of those who remained working in his subterranean labs and factories on the mainland, but this turned out not to be the case. Although the bombs were relatively clean, the radiation was persistent enough to sooner or later poison everyone who emerged too soon. And those who waited underground fared no better—they slowly starved to death. His decision to transfer some of his scientists out of the war zone

turned out to be a prescient one, although whether it was as fortunate for the scientists and their families was debatable.

Being able to observe Caligastia, I could see that he was profoundly rattled by losing control of the situation, although it wasn't easy to tell. He was just as swaggering as ever, asserting that the cataclysm was his intention all along.

"Just how we planned it!" and "Thinning out the human stock" became stock phrases between the Prince and his midwayers. He showed absolutely no remorse for the many millions of dead and dying humans he was leaving in his wake.

"They will fertilize the desert!" I heard him say more than once. What a devil he was becoming!

Vanu was making steady progress with his plans. He'd already sent some of his midwayers ahead to plot out the route. He knew that if the rafts could stay on the southern equatorial current, they would eventually reach the islands. A couple of midwayers were going to be attending to each raft and they had some limited ability to intervene in an emergency, although the way they do it remains a charming puzzle to my kind. I gather only that it requires a great deal of energy and a large number of midwayers operating in synchrony to manifest one of them in your human frequency domain.

Vanu didn't reveal it to anyone except his faithful Amadon, but he had been using his telepathic abilities to spur the subconscious interest of certain chosen men and women in migrating to the islands. Just as back in the days of the city, when the Prince's staff would telepathically call in those they wished to teach, so Vanu was exercising this ancient power. He selected only the finest specimens of humanity, the most emotionally mature and spiritually advanced, from all the tribes and races in his vast territories.

Those chosen would not have heard Vanu's telepathic message as words, or as an instruction on which they should consciously act, but simply as an impulse, an inner prompting that they could neither explain nor deny. As birds migrate instinctively, so did these men and women pick up from their villages and settlements and follow their inner urge to travel south along the island chain, not quite sure of what they'd find until they arrived at their destination.

The route south was now well established, and Vanu arranged for a whole series of canoes at each stage of the journey to ferry the migrants so that by the time they reached Luzon they'd become thoroughly familiar with the ocean. On arriving at the rapidly expanding settlement, they joined in the sailmaking and the rough-and-tumble labor of cutting and hauling the balsa logs.

When they are cut down, balsa trees are extremely heavy; first they have to be rolled out of the forest, and then they're tipped in to one of the rivers flowing down to the coast. There, they have to be dragged out of the river and left to dry out in the heat of the tropical sun.

Luzon lies somewhat south of the Tropic of Cancer, close to the equator. The sun blazed daily from a clear sky. In the rainy seasons the sails were used to cover the drying balsa logs, as it took at least three years for all the water to fully evaporate out of the wood. Then the difference was magical. A single log could be easily lifted by a couple of strong women.

The construction of the rafts was ingenious. Vanu had recommended a modular design based on the seventy-by-three-foot average size of the individual six-inch-deep balsa logs. By arranging the logs on two levels, the top at right angles to the bottom layer, they constructed nine seventyby-seventy-foot platforms. Every platform was equipped with two centerboards, each plank painstakingly cut and chiseled from fallen hardwood trees. These boards were then securely jammed between the logs when the rafts were first floated in the protected bays where they were constructed.

The balsa logs were lashed together using vines made pliant by the constant application of oils and animal grease. Those bindings were then secured by ropes made of strips of tanned deerskin, braided for strength, and used where their capacity to shrink would tighten the joints. Split bamboo, woven by the women into matting, was tied to the logs to form the decking. The edge of the deck was built of wide-diameter bamboo pipes in which each vessel was able to store and carry up to two thousand gallons of freshwater. The weight of these also added greatly to the stability of the rafts. After being used, the bamboo pipes were refilled with seawater to maintain the raft's overall equilibrium.

Bamboo was also used extensively for constructing the deck shelters. The walls and roof were made of woven dried reeds and split bamboo, tied to a

secure pole frame that then was lashed down to the balsa logs.

The masts presented an immediate problem, because the lizard-skin sails turned out to be weighty affairs. After a number of failed experiments, one of the women who'd been working with split bamboo realized how much stronger a beam could be made by laminating a number of split-bamboo strips together. A glue made from boiling down animal bones had long been known in the northern provinces, and it proved to have by far the strongest adhesive grip on bamboo. The resultant masts were short and stubby, but strong enough to support the heavy sails in a strong wind.

The original plan was to link these individual elements loosely together to create a single large platform that was flexible enough to withstand heavy seas. However, when they built and floated a small-scale model in choppy waters, they found the pieces were grinding against one another, the friction eating away at the integrity of the bindings on each of the rafts.

They then decided merely to provide each craft with enough available lashings to loosely tie it together with the others, while also making it possible to cast off the lines, should that be necessary. They wanted to keep the rafts as closely connected for as long as possible. These were unknown waters, and they'd seen enough violent storms on their journey south to know what the ocean was capable of.

Of course, the journey posed a tremendous risk. I wondered to myself whether Vanu was going the same way as Caligastia in his careless use of human beings to carry out his whims. It seemed like an impossible task. The islands were more than a thousand miles away, specks in the middle of an endless ocean. No human had ever intentionally gone that far before. Yes, there'd be a current that would propel them in the general direction, but what with the winds and the constant possibility of being thrown off course, I didn't believe it was going to be possible.

The decision to launch all nine rafts at the same time also seemed rash to me. But when I thought it through, I understood Vanu's dilemma and his gamble. If he were to launch only one raft, wouldn't that have betrayed his lack of faith in the project? And wouldn't it have undermined the conviction among the humans making the journey that the islands did exist? Besides, I thought rather foolishly, how would they be able to get a message back if they had succeeded?

I should have known better than to second-guess Vanu. In my defense, it happens to be an aspect of life on Earth to which I'd given very little attention. The cetaceans! Of course! I simply hadn't realized that Vanu was able to link telepathically with the whales and dolphins! As it turned out, he was able to do it with a great deal more ease than with humans.

Pods of dolphins, who'd swum the Pacific Ocean for more than thirty-five million years and knew every coastline, each island and current, and all the varying tastes of the seawater in the long journey to the Islands of Mu—they were going to be the guides.

Of course! That was why Vanu was prepared to risk the lives of hundreds of men, women, and children on a single trip. He was confident the dolphins would get them there.

And they did!

19

Rebel angels and the Goddess

The Place of Miracles, Purity of Spirit, Dolphins and Sirius B., Islands of Mu, Lemurian Technology, and Confronting the Darkness

Xtul: The Place of Miracles—that was the name the community came to apply to their magnificent ruined salt factory.

They'd been told that *xtul* meant "terminus" in the Mayan language, which seemed synchronistically appropriate, as Mary Ann was quick to point out. Much later, long after they'd left the Yucatán, a more accurate translation emerged from an academic source, which, if anything, was even more ironic to those familiar with *Alice in Wonderland:* it was "the place of the white She Rabbit."

The mystery of Xtul appeared to be beckoning at full volume in the hours following the morning's revelation of the discovery of the place to which the Beings had guided them. Robert's flat statement that each of them had to find Xtul for themselves prompted a variety of reactions, some people determined to set off immediately, while others milled around outside the shack, clearly unsure about what to do or who to follow. It was a moment of truth for everyone.

At around five o'clock in the afternoon, Mein Host was pulled aside to join Mary Ann, Robert, Wendy, and Helen—another of Mary Ann's favorites—to where the Jeep was standing behind the shack. Possessing almost no personal belongings to be loaded, the five of them were soon rattling along the track to where they'd so gracelessly hurdled the fence on the previous evening. Mein Host was driving with Robert beside him; the three women were sitting cramped in the back.

"It was funny because the others were so frightened," Mary Ann was telling Helen about the previous evening. The event hadn't been mentioned in the morning discussion, and my ward was discreet enough not to have talked

about it to anybody during the day.

“What was it you were feeling, Mary Ann?” Helen asked. She was a homely young Irish woman who had joined the community, like Wendy, during the two years Mein Host had taken his sabbatical.

“There was something in the darkness, Helen. It felt so old and familiar. You know how I was saying it changed from light to dark almost immediately? There was absolutely no warning. Bang! It was dark. I knew it was the Beings at work. They were trying to tell us something. . . .”

“Like an initiation of some sort?” Helen was a naturally psychic woman; she knew about initiations.

“More like a greeting . . . ‘This is the sort of thing you’ll experience here.’ More like that.”

“But, Mary Ann, why would they want to scare us so much?” Mein Host was asking over his shoulder.

“It wasn’t meant to be scary. It was like being hit with a blast of high energy. It was neither good nor bad. It just was.”

“Well, it frightened the heck out of me, Mary Ann!” Wendy said, giggling to herself at the thought.

“Me, too.” Robert hadn’t spoken in a while. There was some sheepishness in his voice, as though he were letting his wife down by admitting this.

“If Dave hadn’t lost it,” the Oracle said with some finality, “we might all have stayed there and got the message.”

They reached Xtul as the low sun was seeping through the coconut palms. Mein Host dropped off the others and drove the Jeep back to the village to leave it with the owner before returning to the shack. That would be one of the last motorized vehicles any of them would see for many months.

Confusion still seemed to be reigning in front of the shack, so Mein Host carefully avoided being seen and set off on the long trek back to Xtul.

The other four were asleep when he got back, Robert having hung up a curtain around one of the inside corners of the dilapidated wood building. The other two women were wrapped in their blankets and curled up on the broken-tile flooring. He found his sparse possessions and his blanket already laid out for him and gratefully collapsed to sleep in his clothes.

Lying on his back, Mein Host savored the sensations of the moment—the sea rumbling in a long, undulating bass note; the occasional whine of a mosquito; the stars as bright as any he'd seen, sparkling through the holes in the roof; the slow, even breathing of the women and a slight snoring from behind the curtain; the rasping of brittle leaves in the trees and the sudden screech of a night bird. From all this and his beatific smile, I could tell that my ward wasn't quite sure whether he was already dreaming.

"Last night I felt that I'd reached the pinnacle of my life!" I heard him say to Helen while they were folding up their blankets the next morning. "It's like everything I've done or thought in my whole life all came together in one perfect action."

"Very Zen!" Helen said dryly and turned away. She'd never much liked my ward.

Mein Host joined Wendy in picking up dry twigs and soon water was boiling in their one saucepan over a small fire. There was surprise on Mein Host's face when Mary Ann emerged from behind the curtain with a bag of ground coffee. They'd all been traveling with the minimum of baggage and here was the Oracle with coffee—could she have just conjured it out of the plenum?

I could tell from the state of my ward's subtle energy system that he spent the next three days in a state of ecstasy. No one else had yet arrived and the demands on him were few. He explored the estate while picking prickly pears and coconuts for their meals. The monastery was situated at one end of a wide strip of raw scrubland. He walked along the coast as far as he could those first days. He saw no signs of humans or their dwellings until he reached the Mayan village of Chuburná Puerto some three miles farther down the coast.

One afternoon, as he was exploring a line of bushes at the southern end of the estate, he found himself standing on the edge of a large, rectangular, concrete pool. It was empty and about ten feet deep with a long side running some thirty-five feet. It was well-hidden all the way around by bushes in a wild and almost impenetrable disarray. Vines and shrubs sprouted out of the cracks in the sides, and the bottom of the pool was a muddle of decaying palm fronds.

Unaware at this point that Xtul had once been a salt factory, the pool

remained a mystery to the community. Later they would learn it was used as an evaporation pool for extracting the salt from seawater. But, because it was a dank and depressing place, it was seldom visited, or even mentioned, over the ensuing months and was quickly forgotten about.

They'd brought sufficient freshwater for a few days in five-gallon containers in the back of the Jeep. A hammock appeared from behind the curtain, which Robert strung up between two coconut palms, and which Mary Ann quickly made her daily quarters.

It took three days for the first group of four people to arrive, their heads peering over the top of the cliff and giving tentative looks, wondering whether they'd be invited to stay. One by one they made their way across the dunes and through the trees, nervously approaching Mary Ann for her blessing. Mein Host and the others stood by with smirks on their faces while this uncomfortable little ceremony was taking place.

Fortunately for them, all four were allowed to stay. This was not true, however, the next day, when Richard tried to make his way onto the grounds of Xtul. He'd fallen out of favor with Mary Ann for an inadvertent slight back in Mexico City and now was payback. He was firmly told that he wasn't ready to come and share the sacred place. He wasn't pure enough!

I heard later that when Richard returned to the shack, his story of being thrown out because he wasn't good enough had sent a cold chill through everybody there.

"What the hell do they mean by *good enough*?" Caleb had asked angrily.

"Well, *pure* was what I was told. I wasn't pure enough!" Richard said.

"We're stuck here in the middle of nowhere. We've followed them faithfully all this way—and now we're not pure enough?" Vanessa's voice rose toward the end in a tightly controlled hysteria.

There'd been a long silence, broken only by Vanessa's stifled sobs as they each considered their options. "What did they mean by *pure*?" "Am I pure?" "How can I get pure enough, or good enough?" "What do I have to do?"

You can imagine the thoughts going through all their poor, anguished heads.

In this way Xtul was presenting itself as a harbinger of both heaven and hell.

When the rafts finally arrived on the first of the Lemurian islands, the dolphins set off for the long swim back to Luzon, where Vanu was preparing the next raft and the people who would sail on her. This unusual convoy continued until there were two thousand courageous young adults, one thousand of each gender, safely ensconced on Mu. Escorted by the dolphins, not one human was lost on the six voyages—something for which the dolphins were particularly proud.

It may be stating the obvious to say that dolphins and humans have very different spiritual heritages. There is an important distinction to be made, because it helps clarify some cetacean behavior that humans find extremely hard to understand.

I've heard dolphin lovers ask, "Why are they so willing to sacrifice themselves, if they are so intelligent?" And: "They seem to want to die. I've watched them on TV when they've been filmed beaching themselves. People try to push them out, but they swim right back onto the beach."

And indeed it has been a continuing puzzle for humans who have an altogether different concept of death than dolphins. Although many people believe that life continues in some form after death, very few know that for sure. Those few would have had to return from a memorable Near-Death Experience to be certain of it.

In an increasingly materialistic culture it is inevitable that the concept of physical death must mean complete extinction of vehicle, personality, spirit, soul all gone. Not only is this a thoroughly depressing viewpoint, but it leaves a human holding the most ancient of fears with no way of dealing with the reality of personal annihilation. Consequently, this leads most humans to live in a constant state of a repressed terror of death. Yet, like fish in water, humanity has become so accustomed to swimming in this ocean of fear that people barely notice it consciously until suddenly confronted with the awful reality of personal extinction. Even those brave enough to admit their fear of death find little relief, because the fear itself is so strongly built into the animal nature of the species. It just gets repressed all over again.

With this observation in mind, it should be obvious how other fears are built on top of this foundation of repressed dread. I wouldn't be the first to

point out that fearful people are easier to distract, control, and manipulate.

So, when scientists examine a dolphin's brain and find it as richly convoluted and complex as a human's, and when they note that the brain-body weight ratio of the two species—the correlation by which intelligence is assessed—actually favors the dolphin, they will all be talking in purely material terms. Of course, as humans must know from their everyday lives, it is how an intelligence is used that counts, not in most cases the size of a person's brain.

Science also largely fails to take into account that an individual's intelligence can exist outside of a physical body. Water is a perfect medium from which to leave a body, and dolphins have used their fine intelligence over millions of years for traveling the inner spaces. It's this age-long freedom from their bodies that allows them to be unafraid of physical death.

In this I should emphasize that I am speaking here about their spiritual nature; their bodies experience all the pain and panic humans would if they, too, were being slaughtered mindlessly on the deck of a trawler. The difference between them and human beings is that the essential dolphin consciousness is out of her body long before her body hits the deck.

Taking all this into account, it should be clear that although cetaceans and humans have coevolved on the same planet, they have two profoundly different views of their lives and their destinies.

This also holds true for the long prehistory of cetaceans with particular reference to the family Delphinidae, the more recently evolved oceanic dolphins. Entities from a planet in the nearby Sirius cluster have been choosing to incarnate with these dolphins over the millennia. This pattern of incarnation started about a million years ago around the same time as humans were evolving into fully sentient beings.

Think of dolphins much as Watchers, because they are highly evolved and closer in some ways to angels than mortals. They volunteer for their posts in this world, in spite of Earth being regarded as an extremely difficult place, with its filthy, polluted oceans and rivers.

But they aren't here for a pleasant vacation. They're here to fulfill their most sacred prophecies. They come here to sacrifice themselves, to allow themselves to be trapped in nets and killed, to present themselves for the

various insensate massacres that happen annually among certain cruel and primitive people, to suffer in concrete pools and allow themselves to be dominated by a junior species. The list of human brutality toward a wholly innocent species is endless.

Why they do this I cannot say, because whenever I approach them they tell me the equivalent of “It is written . . .” and that is all I can get out of them. They have told me, however, that they count the sun as the fourth star in the Sirius System and feel a direct responsibility to keep an eye on the affairs of Earth.

They are not encouraged, nor are they necessarily well equipped, to actively interfere with human activities, although they are known to contact individual humans in the Dreamtime. Yet, as they cooperated with Vanu in guiding the rafts to Lemuria more than 65,000 years ago, they have also been known to guide other boats, on other routes, at key points in human history.

On a more everyday level, their tradition of saving human lives when they can, and of befriending particular individuals under special circumstances, has more recently opened people’s hearts to this other, thoroughly alien intelligence. This should be placed and understood in the broader context of humanity’s imminent revelation of the presence of extraterrestrials and angels and the unusual destiny of this unlikely planet.

There are deeper threads to the dolphin presence here on the planet that will doubtless emerge over the course of this narrative. The part they have played has been a hidden one, and when the truth is finally revealed, most likely in the after-death realms, it will be more evident as to just how important their role has been.

Mu was the first island encountered in what was later to become known as the Lemurian continent, although to call it a *continent* is to somewhat misrepresent it. Lemuria is best described as a long series of islands in the western Pacific, varying greatly in size and straddling the equator from thirty degrees south to forty degrees north.

The civilization that flourished in Lemuria for many thousands of years reached a level of spiritual and emotional maturity never to be seen again in this world before the last of the islands disappeared after a series of cataclysmic Earth changes about twelve thousand years ago.

Their enormous stone ruins can be found all over the Pacific Islands. On Tonga, for example, there's a massive, cut-stone, 109-ton gateway, with a 9-ton, notched lintel. Or consider the island's enigmatic pyramids or the monumental blocks of stone, some weighing more than 40 tons, skillfully dovetailed together, and all demonstrating a knowledge of gravity unknown to this day. Then there are the massive, carved, basalt platforms and stairways —now one hundred feet under water—which you can still find off the coastline of the Japanese islands of Yonaguni and Okinoshima.

What our courageous immigrants weren't to know, however, until many millennia later was that their beloved motherland, the Lemurian islands of Mu, lay directly over a line of oceanic trenches you know better as the Pacific Ring of Fire. The islands owed their very existence to the volcanic magma seeping up through the trenches to form the land, but that was not something that concerned them. They truly loved the Earth and felt it was their mother, who'd given them their beautiful islands, just as it was their beloved Vanu who had led them there.

Caligastia has been heard to argue that Vanu should have known how unstable the islands were; and if he did, he ought never to have led his people there without, at the very least, explaining the risks. A specious argument indeed, from one who'd so blithely dismissed any responsibility for a war that killed many millions of his own people! I don't believe anyone took his criticisms seriously—we knew too much about Caligastia by that time. We'd seen the writing on the wall.

Perhaps Vanu did know about it—the staff had done a relatively comprehensive survey back in the old days, and they were certainly aware of the structure and movement of tectonic plates. But if he did, he wasn't saying. Besides, the catastrophes that would ultimately befall Lemuria were still many thousands of years in the future, and Vanu must have been sure the civilization he was so carefully nurturing would have spread itself all over the world by that time. In retrospect, I've come to believe that he likely knew very well what was coming and reckoned it would toughen up the population, prevent them from becoming excessively complacent on their paradisiacal Pacific Islands.

Although I was unaware of it at the time, it has since become clear to me that whether or not Vanu knew of Lemuria's ultimate fate he, like Caligastia

on the other side of the world, was subject to the relentless workings of entropy on a rebellion-ravaged world. Both, perhaps unknowingly, were attempting in their own ways to prepare the planet for its unusual and spectacular destiny.

However, back on Lemuria some 65,000 years ago, that was all still far in the future.

The islands our travelers found, after that long and perilous sea voyage, were indeed a kind of paradise. “Well worth the dangers faced at sea”—I heard as the general consensus among those starting to create the first settlements.

Much could be written about those voyages—the storms, the capsized rafts, the occasional shark attack, the dreadful typhoons some of the rafts encountered, the courage of their dolphin guides and protectors—but I’m sure I can leave all that to your imagination. In many ways those trips weren’t so very different from that epic voyage the Norwegian, Thor Heyerdahl, and his crew took on their much smaller raft—the Kon-Tiki, in 1947—in the opposite direction.

Ironically, Thor Heyerdahl was trying to show that Polynesia was originally colonized from the South American mainland, using a remarkably similar approach to raft building that Vanu implemented so many millennia earlier—traveling west to east from the Asian mainland. What the fine Norwegian explorer failed to take into account were those long millennia in which the great Lemurian civilization thrived, expanding far beyond their island homes. As a seagoing culture, they traveled freely all over the Pacific and, toward the end, across the Atlantic and as deep into the Mediterranean as the Nile Valley.

They fully explored the Indian Ocean, settling the islands of Madagascar and Sri Lanka. Moving with the retreating ice, they put roots down in many of the coastal regions of the Northern Hemisphere. Toward the end, and between the two major cataclysms that devastated Mu, they spread from the Indus Valley into Tibet, as well as disseminating their teachings throughout the Americas. The ruins of the cities they built can still be identified by the massive stone blocks and platforms found high on the Peruvian Altiplano.

In short, the Lemurian civilization, surely the most mature and technologically advanced the world has yet seen, and lasting during its prime

more than thirty thousand years, has to be taken into account in any contemporary survey of prehistory.

I accept that the scientific approach to archaeology and anthropology needs to move slowly, building a coherent picture from discoveries that can be confirmed and experiments that can be replicated and from which predictions can be extracted. This is an admirable approach when dealing with matters that can be confirmed or replicated, but it's not without its dangers. One of the most serious distortions has been the assumption that human history, as you have been led to believe, started at the point at which artifacts can be carbon-dated. But for that, of course, an artifact is required.

As I've previously stated, with the exception of what the midwayers have squirreled away in their Treasure of El Dorado project, nothing remains of Lemuria save their massive blocks of worked stone, most of which remain under water. And because such stonework cannot be accurately dated—and the manner in which blocks of stone, some weighing up to three hundred tons, were evidently lifted, transported, and manipulated so easily by a prehistoric people, doesn't fit into the established narrative—Lemuria remains largely ignored, or worse, ridiculed, by scientists who'd be wise to be more open-minded.

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After three weeks passed and only a handful of people in the community gathered the courage to find Xtul for themselves, Mary Ann relented and sent Eddy on the long walk back to Sisal to fetch the others.

It had been the first major test of their courage as a group—the first of many—and each of those who straggled in to Xtul had to deal with their own failure of nerve. This resulted in a subtle shift in power among those closest to Mary Ann and Robert, depending on the fortitude they'd shown in the face of the challenge. And although I remained with Mein Host at Xtul throughout those first three weeks, it was evident from the miserable state in which the latecomers arrived that life back in Sisal had been hellish. It wasn't the most encouraging way to set out to create a utopian community.

So a new, and a far less relaxed, phase in Mein Host's life started.

Here I should add that because my ward has written previously about this period, it's my intention to relate here only what I perceived as happening,

which contributed directly to his winding, spiritual journey.

At this point, as the community of young men and women gathered in the ruins of the nineteenth-century Yucatán salt factory, each one of them was convinced, to one extent or another, that they were going to be at Xtul for the rest of their natural lives. They'd left the modern world behind them, hadn't they? They turned their back on all that. All the ills of contemporary Western society—the consumerism, the blame and irresponsibility, the thoughtless cynicism, the belligerence and cruelty, the capitalistic greed and industrial slavery—these were left well behind.

I don't want to get ahead of myself here, but I'm bound to comment on the obvious: any attempt to establish a long-lasting community in a location that possesses no water source of its own is either madness, or, as in this case, it might have hinted that Mary Ann didn't have quite the same sense of permanence as her flock. But I may well be misreading her in this—it's one of the constant temptations of retrospective writing I try to avoid—because she certainly appeared to settle into the rhythms of life at Xtul with considerable ease.

Along with the shift in power among Mary Ann's inner circle came an equally subtle change in the way she was regarded by the community. Her brutal refusal to allow anyone into Xtul who wasn't pure enough, followed some weeks later by her merciful concession, created something of the effect a dominatrix generates in her client—a confusing cocktail of fear and gratitude. Although there had already been some signs of this paradoxical psychological dynamic, I believe those first few weeks at Xtul produced what I can only call an idiosyncratic form of the Stockholm syndrome.

I call the state of mind of many of the young people in the group *idiosyncratic*, because they really weren't captives. Each would have claimed they were there based on their own decision, and indeed, they could have left the community at any time. What they would not have understood, and would have vociferously denied had it been suggested to them, was that each in their own way had become the emotional prisoner of a woman who more and more of them were convinced was, in fact, the incarnate Goddess.

Perhaps this is a good time to stop and ask what is meant by *Goddess* and, even more, by *incarnate Goddess.* It is clearly a recognition of the feminine principle, whether or not it's framed in Goddess terms, and it has come to the

fore right now to counter some of the extremes of male-dominated ideologies.

The three main religions of the West are essentially patriarchal in nature and each of them has had their historical struggles with the feminine aspect of the Creator. Christianity's difficulties with feminine power are too well known for comment, and Islam's misguided treatment of women speaks for itself. There are intimations in Judaism of a powerful feminine presence in Shekhinah, which literally translated means "dwelling" or "setting" and is possibly the most accurate rendering available of one of the prime attributes of the Holy Mother Spirit. She does remain in her "dwelling" in the Creative Center of the Local Universe. Furthermore, tradition has it that she does not incarnate into the singular vehicle of any of her children. If I'm to take MA's documents at face value (and the Administration would have no reason to obfuscate on this detail), the Mother Spirit has no need for the individuated experience. She is in her substance the material (*matter, mater,* Latin for "mother") of all the material bodies in her Creation.

This is how it has always been understood by us angels.

However, these are the most uncertain of times, and the past 203,000 years of planetary isolation have led to such a unique situation in this world that many of us now believe almost anything can happen. Even the presence of so many reincarnates like my ward and some of the others is a sure sign that something is brewing in the wings. So many souls originating in other worlds have volunteered to incarnate into human vehicles in order to work here—this is another sign of a gathering momentum of interest in the final days of this, the Fourth World of Hopi cosmology. There are also many others here whose destiny it is to usher in the Fifth World, the era of peace and spiritual progress.

I've spoken here, too, of the strange fate of the rebel angels, those who have been destined to be reborn through a long series of incarnations in both this and other worlds. This has been a laborious and wearisome business for all of us, falling down through time, sustained by the hope that we will at some point enter mortal incarnation.

I should add to all these various incarnational trajectories something that Mein Host has been suggesting recently, which, if true, will be both a divine

joke and an ultimate irony. I have no way of confirming his speculation about the Mother Goddess incarnating in a variety of human vehicles, because I currently have no insight concerning the actions of the Mother. Yet, I believe he asks a reasonable question: If this world is destined to be such a significant one, and there is so much attention being directed here from both the inner and outer worlds, is it not possible that the Mother Goddess might choose to live a human lifetime, or lifetimes, along with so many of her children?

Over the course of Mein Host's travels and the spiritual adventures he's written about, he's had the opportunity to encounter a number of women and men who were evidently incarnated angels and who had, to one extent or another, identified most strongly with the rebel angel side of the equation. A few were consciously aware of their true angelic heritage and understood some of the reasons for their human incarnation; others only felt profoundly different all their lives from normal people and were groping for an explanation. Still others—generally men of an advanced but unconventional scientific bent and who Mein Host termed for his own amusement "Atlantean Black Magicians"—appeared to be trying to be as active and manipulative as they'd once been on their island nation. But, in the case of the half-dozen of these black magician reincarnates he'd come to know, it was something of a joke among their friends that the Atlanteans invariably seemed to be constantly frustrated in their grandiose plans.

If it's odd that such people have no conscious recollection of their former lives, then consider for a moment that it might just be best for everybody if they don't! In this way they have a relatively clean slate to start their new life with. Although they're bound to repeat the mistakes of their previous lives, their current incarnation will likely be orchestrated to allow them to understand and correct the errors of their ways.

This spiritual transformation can be achieved within the span of this one lifetime, as was the case with my ward and a number of other rehabilitated fallen ones he has met—"Rising Angels" he calls them. However, if not corrected in this lifetime, the errors become, once again, the central issue of the afterlife review, in which the true dynamics of those errors can be observed and understood. Then, depending on the result of the review, the soul concerned might choose to return to Earth, or more likely choose to

continue on an upwardly mobile Multiverse career.

No doubt this apparent lack of self-awareness in many incarnate angels is due to an agreement frequently made prior to incarnation. Because it's important to identify fully with being human, with all its many hardships and blessings, material leaking through from a prior incarnation would be a distraction until the being is ready to learn who she or he truly is. This was certainly true of Mein Host. Like him, reincarnates generally agree to forget who they really are so they can live out complete human lives. This is the only way that they have the opportunity to experience the consequences of their choices made at the time of the rebellion.

Some years ago Mein Host started quite unexpectedly (for him) to meet incarnate angels whom he felt were just as evidently drawn from the loyalist camp. At the time of the rebellion, the loyal angels were the ones who supported MA's traditional approach to governance in the face of Lucifer's brilliant and disturbing rhetoric. They were the ones who'd played it safe, who weren't part of the experiment. Under regular circumstances, it's hard to know why they would want to be down here.

Could it be, Mein Host suggests, that they, too, want to be where the main action is going to take place?

All this talk of incarnate angels is a prelude to the far more complex issue of whether the Goddess, the Holy Mother Spirit, is indeed incarnating in human form. And here I have to rely more on Mein Host's intuition, because, as I said earlier, this is an area in which my vision has been closed down.

Mary Ann was the first person he'd encountered who presented herself as a goddess. She was the river, if you recall, in Mein Host's revelatory breakthrough. Yet, as I hope I've suggested in this narrative, if Mary Ann was a goddess, she was a goddess with an extremely dark side. When she came to call herself Kali, and then sometime later Hecate, she was openly accepting and owning the dark aspect of the Goddess. In many ways, it was an act of great courage to represent herself in that way.

I doubt that Mary Ann was familiar with one of the central beliefs of certain of the second- and third-century Gnostics—that it was a fallen goddess, Pistis Sophia, who created this world, only to be ousted by her arrogant eldest son, Yaldabaoth, who then claimed the Creation as his own. But had she been aware of the Gnostic creation story, she might well have

claimed to be Pistis Sophia returned to make sure her Yaldabaoth did not wrest control from her this time around.

When Mary Ann died in her seventies, this might have been one accomplishment in her life of which she could have been rightly proud. To her dying day, she never relinquished her controlling ways.

Over the last quarter of the twentieth century and continuing into the twenty-first, there has been a resurgence of Goddess worship in the West, although in many cases the worshippers have no clear understanding of who or what the Goddess is. And the choice appears to be a wide one. There is no general historical consensus on the nature of the Goddess in the way that monotheistic religions can claim it's the same male God they worship in their different ways. Then there is another confusion as to whether there are multiple goddesses, or whether the Mother Spirit is a Singular Being, the Goddess, who might manifest as any number of lesser goddesses.

Turn to Hinduism and Buddhism and there's no lack of goddesses, yet none of them are claimed to be *the* Goddess. I believe I have shown that the goddesses (and gods) of the ancient pantheons were the last-gasp attempt by rebel midwayers, under Caligastia's command, to manipulate humans for their own purposes and for that of their master. So I don't think we'll find the answer to the Goddess paradox there.

Mein Host doesn't clarify the situation much when he comments on the increasing number of women he's been coming across since the 1980s who appear to be identified with, or manifesting, the Goddess. Whether these are authentic incarnations of the Mother Goddess whose presence here answers his original question, or whether these women are deluded narcissists, will remain to be seen.

This is something I didn't anticipate when I started this narrative, but I find that in so closely observing Mary Ann, I am tentatively exploring the Watchers' relationship with the Holy Mother Spirit, the mother of all the angels in the Local Universe.

* * *

Vanu's approach all through the troubled times since the rebellion was to adhere as much as possible to MA's original instructions for the Prince's mission. As I've demonstrated, he'd had to make some compromises as his

territories spread across Asia. So his colonization of the islands of Mu represented a chance for him to create and oversee a culture that would mature in a natural fashion, in conjunction with MA's plans for the world.

He'd made sure to telepathically draw only the finest genetic stock available to him for the venture. But this also touched a nerve, because for Vanu it represented another of his compromises. When he'd heard from one of his midwayer agents assigned to keep an eye on Caligastia's activities that the Prince had instructed his staff to produce children with humans before they died, this edict, so the agent reported, also applied to any midwayer capable of coupling with a native. This was a far rarer occurrence, because only a small proportion of midwayers were capable of sustained emotional and physical manifestation.

This news left Vanu with something of a Sophie's choice. He knew perfectly well that Caligastia was hedging his bets by trying to produce as many dominant bloodlines as possible. There was no way Vanu felt he could compete. The staff who had remained loyal to him were long gone, and he was sure not one of his depleted corps of midwayers would have any desire for an intimate relationship with a human being.

So, despite being a stickler for the rules and knowing that MA would disapprove, he felt he had little choice but to encourage Amadon to mate with many women and produce as many children as possible. I should add that Vanu, too, was known to have taken wives in hopes of procreating, but as far as I know there were no progeny from his unions.

Contrary to Caligastia, who set great stock on preserving his carefully nurtured bloodlines through centuries, Vanu had insisted that the hybrid gene, introduced by Amadon and the few loyalist midwayers who proved capable of offspring, be distributed as widely as possible throughout the native population.

Consequently, when Vanu sent out his telepathic invitation, he had been able to draw from a broad distribution of excellent genetic material. This ensured that the new civilization he was nurturing on Lemuria, and which was rapidly expanding up the chain of islands of Mu, would start with the best chance of producing a well-balanced, spiritually advanced, ecologically aware, and socially equitable society—one that could flourish for millennia.

Vanu knew all about Caligastia's approach to nation building—his policy

of divide and conquer; his penchant for pitting the strong against the weak; the Prince's use of his midwayers to wreak havoc wherever he required; all the lies, the bribery, the manipulations; and the puppet rulers and the distrust of authority such corruption breeds. Based on these traits, Vanu realized that Caligastia would be imprinting the World Mind in the most negative way imaginable.

His basic concept for Lemuria, as a work of social and spiritual engineering, was to foster a civilization that would function as a counterbalance to the chaos and fear Caligastia and his minions were sowing in the World Mind.

If Vanu were going to be able to cultivate his ideal civilization and keep Caligastia's meddling fingers from corrupting his project, he knew he'd have to keep the Prince and his midwayers from trying to corrupt the peoples' minds. This he managed to do by subtly shaping the religious impulse of the Lemurians, as they were now calling themselves.

As I've previously noted, Vanu had already reluctantly counseled worship of the sun as a visible symbol for the Unseen God, the Invisible Father Spirit, just as he'd later permitted Earth to represent the Mother Spirit.

Sun and Earth, therefore, could be experienced directly as mighty energies —personified or not—and both quite capable in their own ways of supporting life and, just as easily, extinguishing it. In this manner both Sun and Earth can be understood as encompassing their own polarities. Mother Earth either supported a fine harvest, or She might destroy the crops in a hailstorm. Father Sun either warmed the Earth, or He could bake the ground to a desert. There was no one to blame, no devilish figure working behind the scenes making life difficult for humans. They were simply natural events, following natural and potentially explainable cycles.

By the time the Lemurian culture was starting to flourish around fifty-five thousand years ago, the good sense of Vanu's clever piece of religious engineering was bearing fruit. With no supernatural agency to blame, with no "devil to make me do it," people were brought face-to-face with their own failings and were compassionately supported in taking remedial action. This, in turn, allowed for a natural increase in empathy that individuals felt for one another; they understood another's suffering because they accepted their own failings.

Over the millennia, all aspects of Lemurian culture had become imbued with this sensitivity to truth, beauty, and goodness. Countless generations of the people of Mu were able to sustain a brilliant and successful culture for more than thirty thousand years with the single overriding commandment of "Be kind." This speaks to the profound potential of the human spirit to express itself freely and harmoniously within the rhythms and the needs of the natural world. Because they lived in harmony with themselves, the Lemurians could feel and respond to the harmony of the natural world.

They loved their beloved motherland with a purity of passion that induced them to constantly express their gratitude in their massive building works, which they designed to modulate telluric energies while balancing and beautifying the natural environment. The Chinese art of feng shui saw its first and finest flowering on the islands of Mu. The Lemurian landscape architects took the art to an entirely different level, of which the mere placement of buildings is but the dimmest reflection. Such was the Lemurian skill with feng shui that by building with certain forms and in materials responsive to electromagnetic energy, they were able to create different localized microclimates in which they able to grow a wide variety of fruits not indigenous to the islands.

Because the Lemurians approached the natural world without the pantheist's sentimentality, they were able to gain access to some of nature's most closely guarded secrets. They'd learned the art of working with focused sound, for instance, to create frequencies with which they could manipulate matter. The enormous granite blocks, lifted into place by a technology that continues to baffle contemporary engineers, were floated into position by sonically reproducing the frequency of gravity. The quartz content of the granite conveniently resonated to the appropriate vibration, which I'm told is 1,012 hertz, thus nullifying gravity to the extent that a seventy-ton block of stone can be moved with the lightness of a feather.

In fact, the masons working on some of the great monumental structures that were rising on many of the larger islands of the Lemurian archipelago became so proficient at their craft that they could be seen riding on the blocks, skillfully guiding them into place by using their voices to micromodulate the harmonics of the basic beat frequency, which was doing the lifting work.

Their ability to control the weather, necessitated by the vicious typhoons that yearly slashed their way through the islands, was a scientific art, which disappeared with the final demise of Lemuria at the dawn of the modern era some twelve thousand years ago.

A truly fine civilization emerged, the finest the world has yet seen. Vanu's mission was successful. He'd demonstrated that even on the most rebellion-ravaged world it was possible to develop a morally and spiritually evolved culture whose technology was not destructive but worked harmoniously with the natural forces and energies of the Multiverse.

It was scarcely surprising then, that the midwayer guardians, working directly with the planetary Over-government, permitted a scouting group from one of the more advanced of the 258 inhabited worlds in the Pleiades cluster to break the planetary embargo and make contact with the council of Lemurian grandmothers.

This led over time (and the visitors were the soul of caution and consideration in furthering the initial contact) to the Pleiadeans establishing a base on one of the islands of Mu. Due to the wisdom and generosity of the grandmothers, the visiting extraterrestrials were given one of the most beautifully developed of the islands for their purposes. This gave the Pleiadeans a physical locus on Earth from which they could conveniently slip through into the previously mentioned more advanced frequency domain of the Dal universe, which exists in a parallel dimension to the one in which you are reading these words.

It was a glorious time to be a Watcher on this planet, and I even found it possible to put aside all thoughts of the ghastly catastrophe Caligastia had wrought on the other side of the world. To my surprise, I had no desire to visit Zandana throughout the millennia of Lemuria's ascendence, neither to escape the horrors of Caligastia's excesses, nor from the desperate need to regain my balance and sense of self as I had done on my previous sabbatical on Zandana.

Yet, if I ever thought my life of observing the progress of Lemuria's culture was going to continue uneventfully, I had no idea what the Multiverse held in store.

And what of Caligastia? What was he up to while Vanu was implementing

his plans on the other side of the globe?

We left the Prince surveying the ruins of his two empires after a war that had rendered most of North Africa, the Middle East, and much of southern Europe desolate and completely uninhabitable for many thousands of years.

I've speculated as to whether the Prince might be considered insane by this time, but he was certainly not unintelligent. Even though his removal of the scientists from his North African laboratories and factories had indirectly provoked the war, given the resulting devastation it turned out to be a nefariously clever move. He'd saved some of his precious technological knowledge and the scientists necessary for its implementation. He would be able to pursue his obsession over invading Vanu's territories in the laboratories on Atlantis, the name now given to the island that became the scientists' new home. He knew it would likely take many millennia for a self-sustaining technological society to emerge, that there would be an unpredictable number of collapses and revivals before a society materialized that was stable and wealthy enough for its scientists to devote themselves to sophisticated weapons development.

However, Caligastia was in no hurry. He wasn't going anywhere. He was nothing if not patient. And, from what I could observe, he was confident that he would be able to keep the Atlanteans under his control through the skillful use of his faithful midwayers.

Yet, once again, the Prince made the error of sorely misjudging human nature.

The island continent of Atlantis was a geological marvel. If I were to describe it from the air, I would have to say it appeared as though it had been deliberately carved by some gigantic Earth sculptor. It certainly looked like a fabricated thing.

The main island was dominated by a magnificent central, dormant volcano, its slopes falling in a series of concentric steps down to the wide fertile plain that encircled the island. Surrounding this were three concentric rings, each one the circular ridge of a previous caldera.

Unlike the islands of Lemuria—which were also volcanic and which developed successively, tracing a route along the various trenches in the eastern Pacific—the powerful volcano that formed the island of Atlantis

recast itself over and over again in the same location.

The original eruption had collapsed into the magma chamber below, leaving the ridge of the caldera like a great circle in the ocean. A resurgent dome then formed in the center of the caldera, building over time into a formidable new volcano. This, in turn, erupted and then collapsed, forming the second ridge, separated from the first by a circular channel of sea some five miles in width. This process then repeated itself over millions of years to form the third circular caldera and then later the island of Atlantis itself.

The central volcano had not erupted for 780,000 years, so both the island and the ridges that encircled it were delightfully fertile. There were gaps in the outermost ridges that had weathered down to allow the ocean into the intervening channels. Birds of all colors and sizes filled the trees, as did a profusion of winged insects borne there by the powerful westerly winds, but there was almost a complete absence of the animals that the people had known on the mainland.

The various scientists, together with their families, started by making their homes in some of the larger lava tubes while they did their best to reconstruct their laboratories.

Yet, something had changed. I could feel it as I observed their efforts to laboriously hack their buildings out of the rock. They'd been made aware by one of the midwayers who was having second thoughts about his loyalty to Caligastia that the mainland had been laid waste by the war. Although they clearly felt privileged to have been saved, they were far more ambivalent about pursuing or even thinking about further research into nuclear energy. Besides they had far more pressing issues to consider, like survival!

I'm speculating here, but I believe Caligastia deliberately planned to leave the people on Atlantis alone to pull their lives together. I suspect that by this time he would have known all about human beings' capacity for cultural amnesia. Allow twenty thousand years to pass and he was fairly sure the war and the fear of nuclear energy would have passed into myth and superstition. Also, that would allow sufficient time for the radiation on the mainland to dissipate and give the land a chance to come back to life.

What the Prince did find when he finally returned to Atlantis was a thriving civilization of remarkably high general intelligence. Much work had been done to beautify the island—the three concentric channels had been

cleared so boats moved easily between the ridges, wharfs had been cut out of the rock sides of the calderas, and splendid houses lay in a long line, perched on the cliff edges.

As I previously hinted, most of Caligastia's midwayers had been assigned, or had chosen for themselves, specific roles and functions. Some of them also insisted on staying in one general location, as was true for Atlantis. The midwayer in this case was one of those who had insisted on his own primacy. His obstreperousness had made him unpopular with his kin, and his constant doubting of the Prince had made him of little use in Caligastia's immediate plans.

As a consequence, Poseidon (as he was later known) was given Atlantis as his locus of influence. Because of his affinity for the oceans of the world and his work with the dolphins, he thought that he was being given a prize! But later I overheard Caligastia sneeringly joking with a midwayer in his inner circle about "sending that empty vessel Poseidon as far away as possible."

Poseidon was bound to have heard about such an open insult, which is why I'm sure he decided, against Caligastia's express orders, to inform the Atlanteans about the devastating war and to offer his aid and protection for the island kingdom. Unfortunately, because a midwayer is a creature of little imagination, all he could counsel was merely an emulation of Caligastia's policies on the mainland before the war. Besides, I'm sure he felt it was the easiest way of encouraging humans to organize themselves: just allow the most powerful, the most self-serving, the most ambitious and unscrupulous among them to rise to the surface, then throw your support behind those people.

To make the politics on Atlantis even more complicated, Poseidon started lusting after a local girl and through her was soon producing a clutch of twins. Because all ten of these male children possessed a genetic mix of human and midwayer, they grew up to be powerful and magical beings who were also impressively long-lived. When the twins reached adulthood, Poseidon naturally awarded them their own kingdoms within the island continent. Their children and grandchildren, just as naturally, inherited their parents' kingdoms, along with enough of the genes to allow them exceptionally long lives and initiated the belief in conserving the ruling bloodlines as far as possible.

In this way Atlantis came to be divided and subdivided over the centuries, and then over the millennia, under the authority of generations of kings and emperors who spent their time attempting to outdo each other in power and wealth.

Atlantis turned out to be generously rich in all the minerals hurled out of the bowels of the Earth in the many volcanic eruptions that had formed the island continent. The mines for these minerals were spread around in the different kingdoms in such a way as to provide each king with a profitable revenue stream. As a seagoing people, they ranged widely across the Atlantic, colonizing parts of the North and South American coastline as the ice withdrew, as well as conducting extensive mining operations in the American Southwest, before transporting the copper back to Atlantis.

So, as the millennia passed, the island continent, with its economic base in high technology, became the shining hope of humanity's progress on Poseidon's world—or Caligastia's world, as the Prince thought of it.

"It's *my* world, and all that is in it is of *me*!"

This was Yaldabaoth at his most deluded.

I sensed that the Prince was merely biding his time.

We were all aware by this time that no one was ever intended to outshine him, this self-styled God of the World.

* * *

At Xtul the community had finally found its place in the world. The background pulsing of the waves and the constant rasping of the leaves in the coconut palms punctuated, every once in a while, by the sudden thud of a coconut falling to the ground, became the audio track of their lives.

As most of them came from a small, damp island, surrounded by cold, gray water, where drizzling rain was the default weather condition, rising at dawn to yet another clear blue sky was like awakening in another world. With no villages, no towns, no streetlights—no electricity at all, for that matter—for miles around the stars filled the sky at night.

They grew to love the isolation. No radio, no television, no newspapers, no letters from home (the Mexican Post Office didn't deliver); no idea of what might be going on back in the modern world. From compulsively poring over

magazines and newspapers, from listening or watching the BBC News, and keeping up daily with what was happening in the world, there was nothing now but the clarity of sea and sky and the burning, ever-present Father Sun.

This was never going to be an easy life. They knew they weren't there for the swimming and sunbathing. Their rejection of the world included the decision not to use any manufactured tools or utensils, although this gradually fell by the wayside as water had to be boiled and foundations needed to be dug.

Fishing had to be taken far more seriously. On most mornings, Peter could be seen plodding off down the beach to meet up with the village fishermen who'd generously agreed to take him out with them in their boats and throw him a few fish for a day's hard work.

If anyone there had been allergic to coconuts or prickly pears, they wouldn't have lasted long. That was all there was. That and a little piece of fish every few days. Yet, on the positive side, both fruit and nuts were nutritious in their own way. And they grew profusely all over Xtul.

The lack of electricity narrowed their options, as it also simplified their lives—simplified, perhaps, but made them far more laborious. The lack of water, for example, meant that twice a day, two of the men walked north for four miles along the beach to a tiny, Mayan fishing village. Two, five-gallon plastic containers got filled from the public tap as a couple of brightly dressed, middle-aged Mayan women averted their eyes and giggled among themselves while waiting their turn. A pole, cut from a tree at Xtul, was threaded through both handles of the heavy containers and then the pole was heaved up onto the two men's shoulders. The weight made them sway and stagger slightly, trying to get the pole to sit more easily on their bony shoulders before finding, and then settling into, that rhythmic, rolling gait determined by the water sloshing in the containers, and familiar to water bearers the world over.

By the time the pair had trudged back to Xtul, the pole would have bitten excruciatingly into their shoulders with every step. Both hands gripped the pole, trying to minimize the agony of the weight on their shoulders. They staggered, their legs bent with exhaustion and what little could be seen of their skin was red and sun blistered. Each was covered in mosquitoes, so from a distance, as they lurched unsteadily along the beach, they appeared to

be drunk and wearing dark, fur coats, as though they'd just tumbled off the stage of *Waiting for Godot.*

Getting closer, it became possible to see that both men were surrounded by a diaphanous dark aura, a plasma cloud of darting dark bodies, the sun flickering off a million tiny wings. The men didn't stop on their way back. They urged each other on. Stopping would have meant starting all over again. Best to just keep moving. Hands were more valuable for grasping the pole, for taking the weight off bleeding shoulders, than for fruitless attempts to swat away the omnipresent mosquitoes.

Plans were discussed for all the building work required to make the place halfway habitable. Roof tiles were scattered all around the single wooden structure—the one in which most of them were sleeping. These had been ripped off by some long-ago storm. A hundred years of rubble strewn around the floor of the enormous monastery would need to be cleared before anything could be done there. The small stone cottage—pitted with time, roofless, and windowless—was designated to be a home for their Oracle and Teacher, so renovation on the "Temple" would have to start first. The large building, the "Monastery," would have to wait, as Mary Ann and Robert were always the priority.

There were a few among the group who were miserable at the turn of events. I overheard them complaining that "this isn't what I bargained for . . . it isn't the psychotherapy I signed up for!" And "What the hell are we doing in the middle of nowhere?!" And "This is not going to work out well—I know it!"

Both Vanessa and Canadian Dave, neither of whom had quite recovered from what sounded like their "hellish time in Sisal," when they weren't "goddamn pure enough," were evidently having second thoughts about their commitment to the community. There were a couple of other waverers, too. It wasn't hard to build the case that they'd been dumped into a wretched situation.

But, I was more interested in my ward—there would always be complainers in any group, and the tone of their complaints were generally bleats of self-concern. If they were having trouble with the basic situation at Xtul, if they thought they were above all this, then how, I wondered to myself, were they ever going to be able to deal with it when conditions really

became challenging—mentally, emotionally, and spiritually?

Mein Host, however, had taken to the rough life with a joy I'd never seen in him before. For once, the toughening up he'd received at Charterhouse was serving him well. I could feel that he was greeting the Xtul experience more as a test of his mettle. He threw himself as wholeheartedly as ever into whatever task he took on, his body growing strong and tanned in the sun.

Xtul, and the time the community spent there, would become another key turning point in Mein Host's life. He was deeply devoted to Mary Ann, and he felt loved in return. He accepted her as his Goddess, yet never for one moment did he show any signs of worshipping her. He was living now, day by day, in a state of heightened excitement. He felt as if he were awakening from a long sleep. His spiritual vision was opening. He was more deeply happy than he had ever been in his life.

Yet, for all that exhilaration, for all Mein Host's transports of delight, for all the hope implicit in starting out anew, for the promise of what the community could become, Xtul would have a dark and terrible side. Every single one of those young women and men would be tested to the breaking point. Some would break; others would draw on and build up the strength of their faith.

The way in which Mein Host, and each individual in the community, chose to face and deal with the approaching darkness would take their measure.

In confronting the darkness within them, they would come to know who they were.

Afterword

MY LIFE AS A WATCHER . . .

Georgia

The life of a Watcher would feel most strange to a human being for many reasons, because we Watchers locate the core of our existence in an essentially timeless domain. Humans find it convenient to believe that time moves in an orderly forward direction. But this is only a conceit and one to which the human sensorium is tuned. As a humorist has expressed it, “Time exists to stop everything from happening at once.”

When Albert Einstein coupled time and space into an inseparable space-time continuum—no space without time; no time without space—he was, of necessity, speaking about the space and time to which his sense apparatus, and that of most other humans, is tuned. This serves your purposes insofar as it concerns your normal material existence. Trains can arrive on time, the trajectory of spacecraft can be calculated accurately, you are born before you die; time’s arrow appears to move in one direction—from present to future. The space-time continuum works within its prescribed limits.

But what if those limits are actually the result of the limitations of the human sensorium? As an ant’s senses are tuned to an environment that ensures its survival, so will the insect’s experience of time and space be subject to the limitations of its sensorium. In this way it’s possible to visualize how the perception of space and time depends on the sense apparatus of the perceiver.

As a Watcher, my sense apparatus is different from that of a human. My senses are tuned to the space-time continuum in which I find myself, and that continuum is best described as one in which everything happens at once. It’s a dimension I believe a Yaqui Indian shaman calls the Nagual, and it’s also starting to make its appearance in contemporary physics as the holographic

model of the universe.

Understand, please, that, as a Watcher, I cannot make anything happen. My sense of continuity only exists inasmuch as I observe your dimension. This is why I need to work through Mein Host's consciousness—his expanded sensorium—because it gives me a sense of sequence, of causes preceding effects. In a very down-to-earth way, this work would have been impossible without Mein Host's neural circuitry, his memory bank, as well as his typing fingers.

My memories, for example, aren't stored sequentially but seem to flow into one another. It's as though another intelligence, a metaprocess perhaps, is at work deciphering and decoding the narrative, plucking the words and images from some vast astral library of all that has occurred on Earth. Associations are being made over which I have little control. Like particles once in contact with one another and now light-years apart, memories separated by millennia seem to resonate in patterns that I, as well as my ward, would never have thought of on our own.

This was not at all what I expected. My agreement with Mein Host extends to his waiting patiently, while listening on his earphones to BBC talk radio to distract his monkey mind, for when my voice rises up through the noise. I'd never considered the possibility that my words were themselves somehow being organized through me for some larger purpose. This is a mystery to me that I can only discover by continuing the narrative to its natural conclusion. It might take three volumes or, just as likely, ten.

Until I had almost finished this volume, I had no thought that my writing would see the light of day. I was writing for myself and for my ward, but as I reached the last chapter I suggested to Mein Host that he take the manuscript into an entirely different environment, to read it through and make any edits he thought it warranted. I felt he'd have a clearer perception of the narrative in relatively unfamiliar surroundings. This turned out to be so.

I was amused to hear when he'd finished the task at the Washington State home of one of his publishers, that his comment to his host, Adam Parfrey, was that it was like reading a book he'd never read before. And what's more, my ward liked it! It was only then that the idea came to us that the document might be of interest to others. And I say us because both of us needed to

come to an agreement on this.

Mein Host has been wanting to explore the lesser-known and more hidden aspects of the Lucifer Rebellion for at least twenty years. I've observed him trying to find his way into the maze of complications and contradictions, the mythologies and cosmologies, the denial and misdirection, and to write what he understood on three separate occasions. It was only when I entered the picture and made my interests clear that between us we found our voice.

When we started this project, I had no idea how long or detailed the narration would turn out to be. In this, the first volume of *The Confessions,* the main actors in the two threads have been through their own hard times and have reached a certain level of catharsis. Vanu's Lemuria is about to come into its fullness as a great spiritual civilization, Caligastia is planning for Atlantis to become the dominant aggressive power and for his further deification, and Mein Host is filled with inspiration and enthusiasm for the Goddess to whom he's become devoted.

Yet, nothing is ever as it seems.

My memories are activated by the challenge of narrating them. By working collaboratively with Mein Host, I've found that I'm able to use the story of his life as a way of anchoring what otherwise would be an inchoate mass of images with no real sense of sequence. Because I am now completing the second volume, I have the advantage of knowing how the next stages unfold, but the mysteries remain and grow deeper.

I have also been able to observe a slow change in my own attitudes as I've come to examine the consequences of Lucifer's rebellion, both in this world and on my privileged visits to Zandana.

As I'm writing this in the spring of 2012, it's no mystery as to how the global situation has turned out in the modern era. It should also be evident to those not in denial that the human race is approaching a massive transition, a transformation of consciousness that will change the species forever.

Yours is a grand destiny—grander than you can imagine. And, it's being acted out on this seemingly insignificant little planet in a minor sector of a very large Universe, which itself is a small part of an even vaster Multiverse.

It seems impossible, doesn't it?

Yet I've come to appreciate during my time in this miraculous and

mysterious Multiverse that it's the wisest course of action these days to have faith in the impossible.

My deepest interest is how we got here, and, with Mein Host's collaboration, and God's Good Graces, I will continue to write my Confessions until I do understand.

. . . AND WHENCE THE STORY UNFOLDS

Timothy Wyllie

By now you have heard a great deal from Georgia—granted, as filtered through my mind and creative imagination—but less about my own reactions to what Georgia and I set out to accomplish together.

This collaboration of ours is one of the more unusual episodes in a highly unusual life. Like many people, I always had the vague sense of being prepared for some future event, but I would have been astonished to learn that a central aspect of my mission in this incarnation would involve working so closely with a discarnate entity. Over the first third of my life I was extremely stubborn—the very last person you'd think would be writing this book with Georgia. As you have read, I resisted the presence of angels, arrogantly priding myself on my skepticism and my aggressive atheism.

Sometimes, in retrospect, I think that holding to a solid disbelief in a transcendent reality carried with it an unspoken invitation for that transcendent reality to kick me smack in the butt. This was the effect of my near-death experience in 1973, which I mentioned briefly in the introduction.

The NDE changed my life profoundly. The truth of the afterlife was now irrefutable. I was aware that I was one of the privileged few to have gone beyond the veil and returned to tell the tale. I could no longer deny the reality of angels: I'd seen them in my NDE. I had heard them. I had been in their presence. Yet it still took me another fifteen years before I felt confident and centered enough to write collaboratively, in full consciousness, with angels.

I have no doubt that this current work with Georgia is where all these experiences have been leading. Working so intimately with her continues to fascinate and fulfill me as few other projects have done. Georgia addresses so many of my ongoing concerns and questions—asked and unasked—that

creating this work together has immensely enriched and deepened my inner life. She is a rare gift, and I take great joy in collaborating with her as she continues to chronicle her vision of Earth's history.

I'm writing this afterword in the spring of 2012, in advance of the publication of this first volume of Georgia's *Confessions*. At this point we have now completed the next five volumes, so I feel that I know Georgia a great deal better than when we worked together on this first book. I can now speak with a greater understanding of Georgia and what she is up to.

When I grasped what a long and carefully nurtured process this has been, I realized that Georgia had been readying me for this collaboration since she first held my child's spiritual body in her arms while Hitler's bombs were falling all around me. Who but an authentic spiritual being would have the loving compassion to do that? Only much later did I learn that although Georgia was an independent being with her own history and destiny, as a Watcher she also coexisted with me in my inner space.

There is little, or no, physical evidence to corroborate much that Georgia writes about in her analysis of her own long history, so the only way to assess its credibility is to absorb it with an open mind and heart. I can't swear to the ultimate accuracy of her narrative, nor can I assert with certainty that her perceptions are necessarily in accord with those of other angels. But, after working with her every day for the past three years, what I can assure you is that Georgia herself believes unequivocally in the truth of her narrative.

If I were to judge her accuracy and authenticity from what she has revealed about my life, I would have to say that she seems faultless. Human memory is inherently unreliable, and I myself don't have a particularly good memory. Ever since I started working with the angels in the early 1980s and learned that I have a recording angel whose function is to keep a record of all my doings, I made no further effort to actively remember the various events of my life. Besides, having recognized that I have a somewhat nonlinear mind, I keep copious notes in a journal, which allows me to place events in sequence and time. All I require is a starting point to a memory and my recording angel unwinds the event as if I were watching a film on my eidetic screen.

There will invariably be some matters Georgia writes about in this book that she has left hanging, most likely because she doesn't yet understand them

herself. Some of the more provocative lines of inquiry—the questions I was asking myself while my life was unfolding—cannot be answered until further events transpire. Fundamental questions do not have straightforward answers, yet oftentimes the questions themselves turn out to be more valuable than facile answers.

Many of the issues covered in Georgia's narrative are deep ones, seldom addressed by an intelligent, but by no means all-knowing, discarnate entity. Georgia also makes no attempt to hide her bias, which to my mind only bolsters her authenticity. I've noticed, too, that her perspective is evolving as she relates her story, much as she also gradually changed over her time in this world. Her opinions and feelings, for example, about Lucifer's rebellion and her involvement as a Watcher in this world under Prince Caligastia's cruel and arbitrary management will no doubt radically change over the millennia.

Will there turn out to have been a deeper and unrevealed purpose behind the Lucifer Rebellion that will give it new meaning?

Was the "Voice" that Georgia and the other rebel angels heard, encouraging them in their rebellion, the Holy Mother Spirit, a delusion or a Luciferian conspiracy?

Will a Creator Son's mercy and forgiveness turn out to be unconditional in nature?

What will be the true purpose and meaning behind the incarnation of the rebel angels?

What will happen to Lucifer, Satan, Prince Caligastia, and the other protagonists of the angelic rebellion as the global situation on Earth further deteriorates?

Is Georgia condemned to be a Watcher for all time or will she be permitted to enter mortal incarnation?

And what of Mary Ann? Is she a true and authentic manifestation of the Goddess? And Robert? Can he survive being married to an incarnate Goddess?

Over time, will I and other outsiders and rebels of my ilk discover that we, too, are among the incarnated rebel angels?

If the Earth is a kindergarten for toughening up souls, as Georgia suggests, will our planet also turn out to be a great deal more significant in Multiverse

affairs?

These are among the issues that will have to wait until the narrative continues. Until then, you may want to ponder some of these questions as they apply to your own life. Take them into your heart and observe what emerges. The simple act of considering these deeper matters sharpens your intuition and expands your mental horizons. Meditating on these profound issues can also draw the attention of angels, and you may well find yourself embarking a whole new spiritual and intellectual adventure of your own.

When you listen with an open and receptive heart, and trust what you perceive, new dimensions of reality become clear to you. As Georgia says, it is every human being's natural spiritual heritage to participate in the activities of the Multiverse.

Humanity is growing up, slowly and incrementally. However, in Georgia's half-million-year frame of reference, the emphasis tends to be on the individual rather than on the collective. Yet it remains every individual's choice, moment by moment, to respond to the collective context with love or with fear. This is the position where we find ourselves in the early twenty-first century. Regardless of the social unrest we see daily on the TV news and the personal injustices we may have suffered over the course of our lives, the choices are the same. We don't always succeed in making the right ones, but if our basic intentions are honorable, we make more good choices than bad ones.

If Georgia is correct in stating that the path of personal redemption for rebel angels is through a mortal incarnation, and that there are currently as many as 100 million of these rebel angels living out their mortal lifetimes, these will be the humans with the greatest spiritual investment in redeeming themselves and working toward correcting the global imbalance. These are the people for whom Georgia's insights and confessions will be most helpful.

We weren't destined to stay in Xtul for the rest of our lives, as we had thought when we turned our backs on Western civilization. A small group stayed on in the Yucatán, but the community as a whole moved back to London after we were all but wiped out by Hurricane Inez in October 1966. After touring Europe for a year, we moved to America and set up Process chapters in the major North American cities. I ended up running the New

York headquarters from 1975 to 1977.

The community essentially imploded in the winter of 1977, after a number of us left to strike off on our own. The remaining members left New York and, after some years, gave up their religious pretensions and settled on a large ranch in Utah to form Best Friends, one of the largest animal shelters in the States.

My thirteen years in the Process had served me well, and I was confident enough to set up a small business in New York City, marketing and distributing the slide storage system I'd devised back in the 1960s. After three years, I sold my company and realized sufficient money from the sale that if I lived modestly I could spend the next four years free of financial worries to pursue my deep interest in nonhuman intelligences.

After witnessing angels in my NDE, I set out in 1981 to make close and lasting contact with my own companion (guardian) angels. This led in 1984 to my first book, *Dolphins, ET's & Angels* (republished in 1992 by Bear & Company), which remains in print more than thirty years later. The book explored the hidden influences nonhuman intelligences were having on the world in these transformative times. I felt that these influences had proved important enough to demand further exploration, and *Adventures among Spiritual Intelligences* was published by Origin Press in 1992. The third book in this trilogy, *The Return of the Rebel Angels*, was published in 2011 by Inner Traditions/Bear & Company.

More personally significant, I had found my true purpose in life.

I regard my work with Georgia and the books we are writing together as a natural extension of my investigations of nonhuman intelligences. I knew nothing about the rebel angels or the Watchers when I started on this journey, but I am aware that Georgia wants to delve more deeply into what they have been doing these past 203,000 years and the implications of their coming into mortal incarnation. And I might even discover why she insists on calling me Mein Host!

We will be exploring these issues—and many more—in the subsequent books of Georgia's *Confessions*. I look forward to further sharing the lessons learned and the insights I have gained into the nature of the living Multiverse and the deeper currents underlying and influencing our life on this planet. I

welcome your company on this amazing journey!

APPENDIX

The Angelic Cosmology

Different versions of the so-called War in Heaven appear so frequently in indigenous legends and mythologies from all over the world, as well as in the sacred books and traditions of major religions, that the war is more than likely based on a real event. I believe the most authoritative account can be found in *The Urantia Book*, where it is referred to as *The Lucifer Rebellion.*

Thirty years after first reading *The Urantia Book*, I still regard it as the most reliable source of information about both extraterrestrial and celestial activities. It is broken down into four parts devoted to the following subjects: the Nature of God and the Central and Superuniverses; the Local Universe; the History of Urantia (their name for this planet); and the Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ. (For a definition of terms common to both *The Urantia Book* and this book, please refer to the glossary.)

According to the Urantia model, there are seven Superuniverses, which together compose the material Multiverse. These seven Super-universes form the substance of the finite Multiverse and circle the Central Universe, which can be visualized as the hole in the center of the toroidal form of the Multiverse.

Each Superuniverse contains one hundred thousand Local Universes, each of which has its own Creator Son (ours is Christ Michael or Jesus Christ) and its own Divine Mother—these are the creator beings of their domain. This pair of high beings modulate the energy downstepped from the Central Universe to create and form the beings and the planetary biospheres in their Local Universes. Each Local Universe sustains ten million inhabited planets divided into ten thousand Local Systems.

Each Local System, in turn, contains one thousand inhabited, or to be inhabited, planets, and each has its own System Sovereign (ours was Lucifer) appointed to govern the System. Each planet, in turn, has a Planetary Prince (ours was Prince Caligastia), who oversees their particular worlds.

According to *The Urantia Book,* Lucifer and Satan (Lucifer's main assistant) came to believe that an elaborate conspiracy had been concocted by the Creator Sons of the Local Universes to promote the existence of a fictitious Unseen Divinity, which the Creator Sons then used as a control device to manipulate the orders of celestials and angels within their creations. Having announced the existence of this conspiracy, Lucifer demanded more autonomy for all beings and for System Sovereigns and Planetary Princes to follow their own approaches for accelerating the spiritual development of their mortal charges.

The revolutionaries quickly gained followers, and the rebellion spread rapidly to affect thirty-seven planets in our System, with Urantia, our planet Earth, being one of them. Choice was given to the many angels involved with supervising System activities as to whether to join the rebel faction.

Lucifer's charge—that too much attention was being given to ascending mortals—appeared to ring true to a large number of angels, as well as the thirty-seven pairs of administrative angels: the Planetary Princes and their assistants who were responsible for the orderly progression of mortal (human) beings on their worlds. The revolution was effectively suppressed by the administration authorities and recast as a heinous rebellion, its immediate consequence being the removal of Lucifer and Satan from their posts in the System.

At the time of the Lucifer Rebellion, the vast majority of the fifty thousand midway angels on Earth—40,119—aligned themselves with Lucifer and Satan. They were destined to remain on our planet until the time of Christ when, according to *The Urantia Book,* it was one of Christ's occulted functions to remove them. It is a brief reference and no further details are given in the book as to where the rebel midwayers were taken. However, with the removal of these rebel midwayers, a mere 9,981 loyalist midwayers remained here to fulfill the tasks of five times their number.

As a result of all of this, in contrast to a normal planet (one not quarantined) on which angelic companions and the presence of helpful midwayers and extraterrestrials must be commonplace knowledge, we Earthlings have slumbered in our corner of a populated Multiverse, unaware of who we are and how we got this way. Having been quarantined and isolated from normal extraterrestrial activity for the long 203,000 years since

the rebellion, we first lost touch with, and then forgot entirely, our rightful place in the populated Multiverse. Given this, we were bound to evolve as a troubled species. Our world is one of the few planets that, due to the Lucifer Rebellion, have been thrown off their normal patterns of development.

This disquieting situation, this planetary quarantine, has persisted for more than two hundred thousand years, only to have finally been adjudicated, in my understanding, in the early 1980s.

Given that the planetary quarantine has finally been lifted, the rest of the Multiverse is now able to make legitimate contact with us. More recently what we are witnessing is both the return of the rebel midwayers (the Beings of the Violet Flame), who are now coming back to assist us in the coming transformation of our world; and perhaps of more personal interest to my readers, the many angels who aligned with Lucifer at the time of the rebellion are incarnating as mortals. It appears these rebel angels and Watchers are being offered human incarnation as a path to personal redemption and as the world is emerging from an interminably long Dark Age to shake off the shadows and fulfill its remarkable destiny.

Glossary

Many valuable insights in books have contributed to the themes and fundamental questions that *Confessions of a Rebel Angel* seeks to explore, but the most reliable and comprehensive exposition of God, the Universe, and everything that I have come across remains, after thirty years, *The Urantia Book.* A number of the concepts and words below are drawn from it and marked (UB), but the definitions are the author's.

Angel: a general term for any order of being who administers within a Local Universe.

Astral Energy/Astral Realm: a slightly shifted frequency domain, accessible in dreams and OOBEs, in which humans have an astral counterpart—an Astral Body.

Atman, Indwelling Spirit, Thought Adjuster (UB): an essence of the Creator that indwells all mortal beings, human and extraterrestrial.

Bioplasm: (UB) a constituent of an individual's genome required to reconstitute a biological duplicate of the bioplasm's donor, or for calibrating a cloned physical vehicle to its intended environment.

Caligastia (UB): a Secondary Lanonandek Son who served as Planetary Prince of this world and who aligned himself with Lucifer.

Celestial Being (UB): a generic name for a high angel.

Central Universe (UB): the abode of the original Creator God/s—the Father, the Mother/Son, and the Holy Spirit (UB). If the Multiverse is a torus, then the Central Universe is the hole in the middle existing on a far finer frequency and from which energy is downstepped to form the building blocks of the Multiverse.

Creator Sons (UB): co-creators—each having a female complement, the Mother Spirit (UB)—of each of the 700,000 Local Universes (UB). The co-creators of the Local Universes modulate the downstepped energies from the Central Universe to design the life-forms for those beings existing

within all the frequency domains of their Local Universe.

Cybernetics: the science of communication and automatic control (feedback) systems in organic and inorganic complex structures.

Daligastia (UB): a Secondary Lanonandek Son who served as Caligastia's right-hand aide.

Demons: negative thoughtforms.

Decimal Planets (UB): on every tenth inhabited planet the Life Carriers (UB) are permitted to experiment with the initial seeding of biological life by applying what they have learned from the previous nine implantations. Earth is a decimal planet.

Devas: the coordinating spirits of the natural world. All living organisms are cared for by devas (or Nature Spirits). In the human being the deva is that which coordinates and synchronizes the immense amount of physical and biochemical information that keeps our bodies alive.

Elementals: commonly used to describe a subset of the Nature Spirits; the Zephyrs, the Ondines, etc., whose areas of responsibility cover the elements.

Energy Fields (Subtle, Emotional, Mental, Spiritual): a general term for the vibrational energy fields, or standing waves, from the densest material to the finest spiritual, that support life in the Multiverse.

Etheric Realms/Etheric Body: collective terms for the higher frequency domains and the beings that exist within those realms. Many observed UFOs are etheric craft. The human subtle energy systems are also referred to as etheric bodies.

Extraterrestrial: mortal beings such as ourselves who hail from more developed worlds with access to our frequency domain.

Fandor (UB): a large, semitelepathic, passenger bird said to have become extinct about 38,000 years ago.

Frequency domain*:* the spectrum of frequencies that support the life-forms whose senses are tuned to that specific spectrum.

God: in *my* personal experience, God is both the Creator and the totality of Creation, manifest and unmanifest, immanent and transcendent.

Guardian (Companion) **Angels** (UB): function in pairs to ensure their mortal

wards grow in spirit over the course of their lifetimes.

Indwelling Spirit, Atman, Thought Adjuster (UB): an essence of the Creator that indwells all mortal beings, human and extraterrestrial.

Intraterrestrial or Ultraterrestrial Beings: the beings who inhabit our neighboring frequency domain and who *The Urantia Book* call the midwayers or midway creatures.

Jesus Christ: the Michaelson (UB) of our Local Universe (UB) who incarnated as Jesus Christ in the physical body of Joshua ben Joseph; he is also known as Michael of Nebadon (UB).

Lanaforge (UB): a primary Lanonandek Son who succeeded Lucifer as System Sovereign.

Lanonandek Order of Sonship (UB): the third order of Local Universe Descending Sons of God who serve as System Sovereigns (Primary Lanonandeks) and Planetary Princes (Secondary Lanonandeks).

Life Carriers (UB): the celestial order responsible for the development and seeding of organic life on all inhabited planets.

Local System (UB): our Local System, named Satania (UB) is believed to currently possess between 600 and 650 inhabited planets; Earth is numbered 606 in this sequence (UB).

Local System HQ Planet, Jerusem (UB): the political and social center of the Satania System.

Local Universe (UB): a grouping of planets that comprises ten million inhabited worlds.

Lucifer (UB): deposed System Sovereign and primary protagonist in the rebellion among the angels.

Lucifer Rebellion (UB): A System-wide rebellion among the angels occurring 203,000 years ago on Jerusem that affected thirty-seven inhabited worlds, of which Earth was one.

Machiventa Melchizedek (UB): the particular Melchizedek brother who served on this planet four thousand years ago and created a missionary school at Salem, in Palestine.

Magisterial Son (UB): a celestial being of the Avonal Order who appears as a material being of the realm to adjudicate a dispensation prior to entering a

new one.

Master Universe (UB): the Multiverse containing the seven Superuniverses (UB).

Melchizedek Receivers (UB): small groups of Melchizedek who act as assessors and sometimes as substitute administrators when required by defaulting planetary administrations.

Melchizedek Sons/Brothers (UB): a high order of Local Universe Sons devoted primarily to education and who function as planetary administrators in emergencies.

Melchizedek Universities (UB): The great universities run by the Melchizedek Brothers in the higher realms and which become available to ascending mortal souls.

Michaelsons (UB): a generic term for the spiritual ruler of any given Local Universe; our Michaelson is Jesus Christ who incarnated in the physical body of Joshua ben Joseph.

Midwayers or Midway Creatures (UB): intelligent beings, imperceptible to humans, who exist in a contiguous frequency domain and serve as the permanent planetary citizens.

Mortals (UB): intelligent beings who emerge as a result biological evolutionary processes on a planet. Souls are born to their immortal lives as mortals, whose physical bodies live and die before they are given the choice to continue their Multiverse career.

Mortal Ascension Scheme (UB): the process by which all mortal beings who live and die on the material worlds of the Local Systems pass up through the seven subsequent levels to Jerusem where they embark on their Universe career.

Mother Spirit (UB): with the Michaelson, the female co-creator of a Local Universe.

Multiverse: the entire range of frequency domains, on every level of the Master Universe (UB).

Multiverse Administration: a general term for the celestial administration, with special reference to Local Universe bureaucracy.

Nebadon (UB): the name of this Local Universe of ten million inhabited planets.

Paradise Trinity (UB): Father, Mother/Son (split being), and Holy Spirit; the Trinity locates itself in the Central Universe (UB), the original Creation, from which the Master Universe (UB), or the Multiverse, is energetically downstepped.

Satan (UB): Lucifer's right-hand aide who co-instigated the angelic rebellion 203,000 years ago.

Satania (UB): the name of this Local System of one thousand inhabited or to-be-inhabited worlds.

S**eraph(im)** (UB): a high order of angels whose functions include that of companion (guardian) angels, or, like Georgia, observing angels.

Seraphic Transport System (UB): Transport Seraphs, living beings who carry non-material beings, Watchers as well as Ascending Mortals, to the other worlds on a variety of frequency domains within the Multiverse.

Settled in Light and Life (UB): a phrase used to indicate that a global population has reached a level of overall spiritual harmony, social equity, and peaceful and creative cooperation.

Supernaphim (UB): the highest order of Central Universe ministering spirits.

Superuniverse (UB): a Universe that contains 100,000 Local Universes (UB).

Supreme Deity (UB): a God in the making; an experiential Divinity derived from the spiritual experience of all sentient beings, material or celestial.

System of Planets (UB): a grouping of planets consisting of one thousand inhabited, or to be inhabited, planets.

System Sovereign (UB): the administrative angel, together with an assistant of the same rank, who is in overall authority of a Local System; Lucifer and Satan were the pair in charge of this System of planets.

Thoughtforms: quasi-life-forms existing in the astral regions, drawing their limited power from strong emotional thoughts projected out from human mentation, both conscious and unconscious; thoughtforms can be negative or positive; localized negative ones are referred to as fear-impacted thoughtforms.

Torus: The form of a ring-shaped doughnut; the finite shape of the

Multiverse.

Ultimatons (UB): subelectronic particles; the smallest possible quanta of matter, possibly the hypothetical Planck particle; one hundred ultima-tons are said to resonate within the field of an electron (UB).

Ultraterrestrial or Intraterrestrial Beings: the beings who inhabit our neighboring frequency domain and who *The Urantia Book* calls the midwayers or midway creatures.

Universe Broadcast Circuits (UB): instantaneous transmission systems that interconnect all realms and worlds with developed intelligent life, with the exception of those planets under quarantine.

Universe Career (UB): a mortal's destiny, unless chosen otherwise, to rise through the many hundreds of levels of the Multiverse to finally encounter the Creator.

Universe(s) of Time and Space (UB): a synonym for the Master Universe to describe the manifest Multiverse.

About the Author

Timothy Wyllie chose to be born in London in 1940 at the height of the Battle of Britain. Surviving an English Public School education unbroken, he studied architecture, qualifying in 1964 and practicing in London and the Bahamas. During this time he also worked with two others to create a Mystery School, which came to be known as the Process Church, and subsequently traveled with the community throughout Europe and America. He became art director of *PROCESS* magazine, designing a series of magazines in the 1960s and ’70s that have recently become recognized as among the prime progenitors of psychedelic magazine design.

In 1975 Wyllie became the director of the New York headquarters, organized a series of conferences and seminars on such unorthodox issues as out-of-body travel, extraterrestrial encounters, alternative cancer therapies, and Tibetan Buddhism. After some fractious and fundamental disagreements with his colleagues in the community, he left to start a new life in 1977. The record of Wyllie’s fifteen years in the Mystery School of the Process Church and the true account of this eccentric spiritual community appears in his book *Love, Sex, Fear, Death: The Inside Story of The Process Church of the Final Judgement*, which was published by Feral House in 2009. It is slowly becoming a cult classic.

A profound near-death experience in 1973 confirmed for Wyllie the reality

of other levels of existence and instigated what has become a lifetime exploration of nonhuman intelligences. Having created his intention, the Multiverse opened in a trail of synchronicities that led to his swimming with a coastal pod of wild dolphins, two extraterrestrial encounters—during one of which he was able to question the ET mouthpiece as to some of the ways of the inhabited Multiverse—and finally to an extended dialogue with a group of angels speaking through a light-trance medium in Toronto, Canada.

Wyllie's first phase of spiritual exploration was published as *The DETA Factor: Dolphins, Extraterrestrials & Angels* by Coleman Press in 1984 and republished by Bear & Company as *Dolphins, ETs & Angels* in 1993.

His second book, *Dolphins, Telepathy & Underwater Birthing,* published by Bear & Company in 1993, was republished by Wisdom Editions in 2001 under the title *Adventures Among Spiritual Intelligences: Angels, Aliens, Dolphins & Shamans*. In this book Wyllie continues his travels exploring Balinese shamanic healing, Australian Aboriginal cosmology, human underwater birthing, dolphin death and sexuality, entheogenic spirituality, the gathering alien presence on the planet, and his travels with a Walk-In, along with much else.

Wyllie's work with the angels through the 1980s resulted in the book *Ask Your Angels: A Practical Guide to Working with Your Messengers of Heaven to Empower and Enrich Your Life,* written with Alma Daniel and Andrew Ramer and published by Ballantine Books in 1992. After spending time at the top of the *New York Times* religious bestsellers, *Ask Your Angels* went on to become an international success in eleven translations.

The Return of the Rebel Angels and *Confessions of a Rebel Angel* continues the series he began with *Dolphins, ETs & Angels* and *Adventures Among Spiritual Intelligences,* presenting further in-depth intuitive explorations of nonhuman intelligences. It draws together the many meaningful strands of Wyllie's thirty-year voyage of discovery into unknown and long-taboo territories into a coherent and remarkably optimistic picture for the immediate future of the human species, with the inconspicuous help of a benign and richly inhabited living Multiverse.

The Helianx Proposition or The Return of the Rainbow Serpent, also thirty years in the making, is Wyllie's illustrated mythic exploration of an ancient extraterrestrial personality and its occult influence on life in this world.